



PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE CARRONGRANGE SCHOOL

A REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION

28th AUGUST TO 11th OCTOBER 2013

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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2012, the Scottish Government approved a bid for funding to rebuild Carrongrange School on a new site as part of their “Schools for the Future” programme. This means that Falkirk Council can deliver a new single-storey secondary school that will be purpose-built from the outset for the pupils that the school now serves. It is planned to open the new school in August 2016.

Proposal

It is proposed that Carrongrange School is moved to one of the following 2 locations:

- Weedingshall in Polmont
- Land beside Moray Primary School in Grangemouth

The details of the proposal can be read in the Consultative Document which is attached as [Appendix D](#).

Purpose of Consultation Report

The relocation of a school requires a formal consultation to be carried out in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This report Documents the formal consultation undertaken on this proposal between 28th August and 11th October 2013.

Timelines

- The Consultation was over a 6 week period from 28th August and 11th October 2013
- Education Scotland reported back on the educational aspects of the proposal on 5th November 2013.
- This Consultation Report was published online on 11th November 2013

Consultees

During the consultation period, views were sought from a range of stakeholders and interested parties as follows:

- Parents of all pupils at Carrongrange School and of all pupils in Primary additional support classes (Enhanced Provision at 15 schools, Maddiston Primary School Time Zone, Kinnaird Primary School Thistle Wing, Windsor Park School and the Ladeside Primary School ASD Base). They were sent a consultative document/pro-forma response form with a covering letter. These 450 families could be directly affected by the proposed relocation.
- Pupils at Carrongrange School.
- The staff at Carrongrange School were all emailed directly with the consultative document/pro-forma and invited to an afternoon meeting on 5th September to discuss the proposals.
- The parent councils of Carrongrange School, Kinnaird Primary School, Maddiston Primary School, Moray Primary School and Windsor Park School were sent a consultative document/pro-forma response form with a covering letter
- All active Community Councils in the affected area were consulted.
- All Falkirk Council elected members were consulted.
- The four main trade unions at the school, EIS, GMB, Unison and Unite were consulted.
- Several other local authorities with pupils currently attending Carrongrange School were also consulted.

2 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Summary

There were 82 written responses to the consultation from 77 individuals and 5 groups and organisations. These are summarised in this report and can be read in full in [Appendix A](#).

These written responses were received by post and e-mail. They are summarised by category in the following table 1 below:

Table 1 - Total number of respondents by category

Type of Respondent	Number of Responses
Individuals	77
Groups/Organisations	5
TOTAL	82

Analysis of All Individual Respondents		
Type of Respondents	Number of Responses	%
Parents	40	52%
Staff	33	43%
Others	4	5%
TOTAL	77	100%

Analysis of All Group/Organisation Respondents		
Type of Organisations	Number of Responses	%
Parent Councils	1	20%
Staff Group	1	20%
Trade Unions	2	40%
Other Councils	1	20%
TOTAL	5	100%

Response Analysis

Responses from Individuals

The number of responses to the consultation that favoured either site proposed are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Responses from Individuals to Proposal

	Weedingshall		Moray		Neither or None specified		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Parents	16	40%	21	53%	3	7%	40	100%
Staff	18	55%	8	24%	7	21%	33	100%
Others	1	25%	0	0%	3	75%	4	100%
All individual responses	35	45%	29	38%	13	17%	77	100%

Response From Pupils

The pupils at Carronrange School mainly responded collectively. Due to the nature and variety of their responses, it is difficult to ascertain a majority preference for one location. There were strong views expressed in favour of both sites and the pupils have provided a valuable insight on both locations from their perspective.

Carronrange School Student Council:

A site visit was organised on 7th October and this was attended by 19 members of the Student Council. Officers showed the pupils around both sites and answered the many questions they had. This visit to the sites was followed by a presentation by the pupils to a whole school assembly on 9th October. The views of the Student Council on both sites, in their own words and taken straight from their presentation, are as follows:

Moray:

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat Ground – good for wheelchair users • Near shops and a café • Near the football stadium • A lot of outdoor space • Close to a park • Close to another high school • Good bus service • Local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next to 2 primary schools • May share facilities • Too close to houses • Not such a nice location • Nowhere to explore in the grounds (too flat)

Weedingshall:

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautiful scenery, views, nature • Quiet, peaceful • Near shops and a café • Near to community centre • A lot of outdoor space, grounds are interesting • Close to a park • Close to 2 high schools • Good bus service • Lots of opportunities for outdoor learning • Cycle paths and woodland walks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground difficult for wheelchair access • Isolated • Entrance road • No pedestrian crossing • Pavements better on opposite side of the road <p><i>(NOTE: If Weedingshall is chosen, they suggested a crossing should be provided near the entrance to the wider pavements on the other side of the road)</i></p>

Class Responses

Following the assembly and Student Council presentation, this was discussed in the classroom and 4 written responses were received from individual classes as follows:

Class	Preference	Comments
Class 1L (S1) (8 pupils)	Moray – 3 Weedingshall – 3 Undecided - 3	<p><u>Moray</u> There's a big massive bit of grass and they might build it there. It's closer to the shops. It has a big grass space so you can run about.</p> <p><u>Weedingshall</u> Playground will get bigger. It's got lots of grass and is next to a church. It's good. You can't go on the motorway and it's lovely.</p>

Class	Preference	Comments
Class 1M (S1) (10 pupils)	Moray – 6 Weedingshall - 4	<u>Moray</u> Flat ground. Closer to more shops and parks <u>Weedingshall</u> It's quieter so will suit pupils who don't like a lot of noise. We would want another entrance/exit so that we didn't have to walk on narrow pavement next to a busy road
Class 2M (S2)	Weedingshall	
Class 5A (pupils with severe and complex needs)	Moray	The pupils who were able to express a reasoned opinion gave the thumbs up symbol to Moray. The wheelchair user was concerned about being able to move around the Weedingshall site.

Responses from Groups and Organisations

There were 5 responses from groups and organisations that were all in support of the proposals. The full response from each group or organisation can be read in [Appendix A](#) and are summarised below.

Carrongrange School Parent Council

A response was received from Carrongrange Parent Council who favour the Weedingshall location. Their response was as follows:

"The current number of parent and co-opted members of our council are 11. The split on site selection is as follows, 4 in favour of land adjacent to Moray primary, 5 in favour of Weedingshall and 2 non-replies. The figures allow myself as chair of Carrongrange Parent council to give recommendation to Weedingshall as our preferred site location."

Carrongrange School Staff

Carrongrange school staff responded collectively with a request that the new location, whichever is chosen, should build on the strengths of the current location in Larbert. Their response was as follows:

"This is from all staff at Carrongrange School, detailing the aspects of the current location of Carrongrange School that, if possible, should be replicated in the new site.

What works in our current location:

- Adjoining a mainstream secondary school
- Walking and wheelchair pushing distance to local cafes, shops, supermarket, community centre, Church
- Close access to public transport links – bus and train
- Local community links
- Proximity to shops, café's etc.
- Easy access to Larbert High School
- Good level pavements for walking
- Variety of environment for walking (woods etc.)
- Proximity to public transport

What could work better:

- Increased outdoor learning areas, including cycle tracks for ordinary and specially adapted bikes, and playground/sports areas (running tracks, football pitches etc.)."

30 members of staff also provided an individual response and their written comments are detailed in [Appendix A](#).



GMB (Falkirk Branch)

The Falkirk branch of the GMB union responded as follows:

“As both proposed sites are a considerable distance from the current one, would there be any re-deployment opportunities for any staff members who may have difficulties in commuting to and from any new location? Specifically staff who may only be employed for an hour or two each day and who may have to rely on up to 4 buses to get to and from this new location. Therefore the transport costs would significantly impact on their income.”

(see Section 5 for our response to the question asked)

Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) (Falkirk Branch)

The Falkirk branch of the teacher's union EIS provided a lengthy response which can be read in full in [Appendix A](#).

In summary, the EIS (Falkirk Branch) disagree with the proposed relocation of Carrongrange School as they do not consider that either of the proposed sites “meet the educational needs of Carrongrange School community and neither offer any advantage over the present site”. They also expressed their concern that the community links built up in the Larbert area would be lost with the planned move to another area.

West Lothian Council

West Lothian was one of the councils that were consulted as stakeholders because they have pupils from their own area attending Carrongrange School. They responded as follows:

“Having considered the two options for the location of the new school, West Lothian Council has no preference and would be happy with either site.

Two public meetings were held during the consultation period as follows:

Public Meetings

Moray Primary School (17th September 2013)

36 members of the public, including parents and school staff, attended the meeting.

The meeting was preceded by an opportunity to visit both sites. These site visits were well attended by both parents and staff and a number of Council Officers were in attendance to show people around and answer questions informally.

Carrongrange School (24th September 2013)

18 members of the public, including parents and school staff, attended the meeting.

The full minutes from these meetings can be read in [Appendix B](#).

3 SUPPORT FOR THE WEEDINGSHALL LOCATION

Overall Response

45% of individual respondents (35 responses) to the consultation favoured the Weedingshall location.

Although this represents a small majority of those that responded, there is no overall or significant majority in favour of either site and neither is there a consensus between the different groups of consultees.

A majority of Carronrange staff that responded preferred Weedingshall, but this is counter-balanced by the majority of parents being in favour of the Moray Primary School location. The full text of all responses received can be read in [Appendix A](#).

The only group that expressed a preference was the Carronrange School Parent Council who preferred Weedingshall, again by a small majority.

Summary of Responses in Favour of this Location

The main points coming out of the individual responses in favour of the Weedingshall location were as follows:

- It is a more central location
- There are concerns about the potential traffic issues that would arise from building another school at the Moray site
- It is a quiet, rural setting in beautiful surroundings
- There is more room for growth than at the Moray site
- It is a less industrial area
- It is not next to a primary school like the Moray site. It was felt this would be inappropriate for secondary age pupils and could lead to compromises regarding the sharing of facilities.
- It has greater potential for outdoor learning
- The school would have its own identity in this location

A number of the staff that responded felt that community access and links could be developed successfully at Weedingshall, despite its more isolated setting.

4 SUPPORT FOR THE MORAY PS LOCATION

Overall Response

38% of individual respondents (29 responses) to the consultation favoured the Moray Primary School location.

A majority of Carrongrange parents that responded preferred the Grangemouth site, but this is counter-balanced by the majority of staff being in favour of the Weedingshall location. The full text of all responses received can be read in [Appendix A](#).

Summary of Responses in Favour of this Location

The main points coming out of the individual responses in favour of the Moray Primary school location were as follows:

- It has nearby access to a range of community facilities
- There are better public transport links
- The flat site and surrounding streets would be more accessible for less mobile pupils than Weedingshall, which is quite hilly
- The pedestrian access to the surrounding area is generally safer
- There is less chance of accessibility problems during snowy weather
- The level site will ensure that the Council can provide maximum value for money
- It will be easier to forge links with the local High School and the community
- It is a central location for many
- There were concerns about the proximity of Weedingshall to the cemetery

5 RESPONSE TO THE MAIN ISSUES RAISED

A number of issues relevant to the proposal were raised in the written responses. The main areas of concern are listed below with the response of Education Services.

Issues Raised Concerning Weedingshall

1. **It is a hilly site that would disadvantage less mobile pupils, particularly those that use wheelchairs, and create difficulties for the staff that they rely on.**

The area of the site that would be built on is level and would be made easily accessible for all pupils. Any outside areas that must be available for all pupils such as car parking/drop-off, playground, garden areas and sports facilities will all be made fully accessible with the necessary ramping and hand rails for wheelchair users and pupils with other mobility problems and visual impairments.

2. **There are concerns about pedestrian access to nearby community facilities.**

If this site is chosen, a full safety assessment would be carried out in the immediate vicinity, and all possibilities for improving road safety will be looked at. The pupils suggested a pedestrian crossing near the entrance to access the wider pavement on the other side and the footpath up to Polmont Park. The options for providing this would certainly be assessed at the next stage of the process.

3. **It is next to and shares an access road with a cemetery.**

The location of the cemetery cannot be changed, but the access road can be designed/alterd to provide better separation from funeral traffic.

4. **The entrance road and surrounding roads would lead to access problems for pupils and staff in the winter months.**

The surrounding roads are all assigned as Priority 1 for gritting and clearance. The entrance road to Weedingshall can be assigned a similar high priority if a new special school is built here. The school would therefore be accessible in all but the most extreme winter weather which normally affects most or all of the schools in the Falkirk Council area.

5. **Public transport links are poor.**

There are bus stops at or nearby the entrance with a regular service (number 38), every 20 minutes to Falkirk Bus Station, continuing through to Camelon, Larbert and Stirling.

6. **The proximity to the distillery and potential pollution risk was a concern for some respondents.**

It has been confirmed that there will be a flue from the gas fired boiler which will terminate at ridge height (Weedingshall is on the opposite side of this ridge). There should be no smells or smoke from such an installation and the emissions will consist of mostly water vapour.

7. **It is too isolated.**

Despite the rural setting, Weedingshall is in a very central location and within easy reach of Falkirk town centre and a number of secondary schools. Many respondents saw the isolated setting within the context of this very accessible location as a positive attribute rather than a concern.

Issues Raised Concerning Location Beside Moray Primary School

8. **One respondent expressed concern over the prospect that the old house would be demolished.**

The current building would need to be demolished in order to make way for a new school. It is not a listed building, so there is no obligation to retain it.

1. **A new school at this location would exacerbate traffic congestion.**

A new school at this location would have its own discrete and separate entrance and this, in conjunction with any necessary traffic management/calming measures, would be designed in close consultation with Roads officers at the Council to minimise impact on local traffic levels. Carrongrange School generates far less traffic than a similar school of this size because nearly all of the pupils at Carrongrange travel to school by minibus taxi. This limits the number of vehicles coming into and out of the area at busy times.

2. **The site is not large enough and there would be a lack of room to expand.**

There is plenty of room to build the new school to a generous footprint with space left over for playing fields and future expansion. The current school (including car parking, access and playgrounds) covers an area of 1.25 hectares and would easily fit into the proposed Moray site which covers 2.9 hectares.

3. **It is adjacent to a primary school which does not provide age-appropriate role models for Carrongrange pupils.**

The two schools would be quite discrete, with separate campuses. If the new school is built here, close links would be forged with the nearby Grangemouth High School.

4. **It is in the "Blast Zone".**

Formal consultation with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) would be required if this site is chosen as we would be proposing a new school within the "Outer Consultation Zone". HSE can refer a planning application to Scottish Ministers, so early engagement with them will be essential and their advice will be an important consideration moving forward.

5. **It is close to a recent fly infestation problem.**

The source of the infestation has been identified as being the Oran Environmental Ltd waste treatment facility in the Abbotsinch Industrial Estate. Whilst this is close to the Moray Primary school site, the problem has mainly manifested itself adjacent to and downwind of this facility, although an increase in the number of flies has been reported throughout Grangemouth. Being south and west of the Oran facility, the Moray PS site is upwind with respect to the prevailing south-westerly's, so far less likely to be seriously affected. It should be noted that regulatory intervention by SEPA should ensure that the problem is resolved well in advance of the new school opening in August 2016.

1. **Neither site will retain the close proximity to a secondary school that the school currently has.**

The school will develop close links with at least one nearby secondary school, whichever site is chosen so that pupils can share mainstream facilities and inclusion can be developed for those pupils that require this.

2. **A few respondents feel that the relocation of Carrongrange School, and not Larbert High School is discriminatory.**

Other General Issues Raised

The decision to rebuild Carrongrange School was taken because it is in the interests of Carrongrange School for the reasons outlined in the Educational Benefits Statement in the Consultative Document (see [Appendix D](#)). A new build for Carrongrange School provides the opportunity to deliver something that better meets the very specialist needs of its pupils going forward.

3. **The GMB union asked whether there will be re-deployment opportunities for staff disadvantaged by the relocation due to increased transport costs?**

There is no formal mechanism for re-deployment in these circumstances, but it is currently Falkirk Council policy that additional (“excess”) travelling expenses can be claimed by staff that are expected to travel 4 or more additional miles each day, for a period of 3 years following a compulsory change in their place of work.

6 REPORT BY EDUCATION SCOTLAND

Legislative Duty

Under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Education Scotland (formerly Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education) must prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal out to consultation.

Summary of Report

The Education Scotland report can be read in full in [Appendix C](#).

The summary conclusions, taken directly from this report, were as follows:

- Falkirk Council has set out the case for relocating Carrongrange School and given concise and helpful information on the two preferred sites to allow consultees to inform them on the final site decision.
- They have explained the context and reasoning for their proposal well.
- They have made a strong case for the building and facilities that will be built on the chosen site.
- However, the proposal provides less detail on the proposed sites. The proposal is focused on site selection. Key information to inform such a decision has not yet been provided.
- Respondents have not given either site a significant majority of support.
- Falkirk Council need to provide information on how all key stakeholders will be involved in the design and build stages, whichever site is selected.
- The importance of developing young people's life skills in settings such as Carrongrange School is crucial and, in taking forward the proposal, Falkirk Council needs to provide more information on how it plans to support the development of links with whichever local community and high school is selected and provide reassurance to young people that they can move about their new local area safely and independently.

APPENDIX A: WRITTEN RESPONSES

Responses from those in favour of the Weedingshall location

Pro-forma responses and e-mails

The written comments attached to those responses received that were in favour of the Weedingshall location are shown below:

From groups and organisations:

- “The current number of parent and co-opted members of our council are 11. The split on site selection is as follows, 4 in favour of land adjacent to Moray primary, 5 in favour of Weedingshall and 2 non-replies. The figures allow myself as chair of Carrongrange Parent council to give recommendation to Weedingshall as our preferred site location.(CARRONGRANGE SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL)

From individuals:

Parents

- “I think the grounds and surrounding area are better at the Polmont site. I would not be happy for my son to be so close to the factories in Grangemouth.”
- “Not in Blasting Zone. Not near recycling plant where recent infestation of flies has occurred. Traffic congestion around Moray/Oxgang Primary is a major concern. Weedingshall appears to be a quieter/calmer option for my child to achieve his educational potential.”
- “I feel Polmont will give the school its own individual character and space to breathe. It is a more central location for people to get to and from.”
- “Land at Weedingshall would appear to be more of a "blank canvas" with little or no surrounding buildings/houses. The land at Moray is within a residential area and adjacent to other schools therefore more traffic and possible access issues for all transport. Increase in traffic may not be pleasing to local residents.”
- “I think this area is a lovely area and the size of it is excellent. There is a lot of potential here for other projects and the kids won't have to share any of the building with any other schools”
- “I prefer this school as it is closer to his home and would be a lot handier for myself and his dad to get to”
- “Due to location being easier for travel arrangements”
- “Think it will be as said in the report, a quiet and peaceful setting”
- “My son attended Moray Primary and even though it is central to all of Grangemouth's amenities it is a very enclosed and busy area. At home time the roads around the school become very congested and would become even more so when the mini buses and taxis come to drop off and pick up. Once the building is erected in Grangemouth there would not be much room left to expand if required. Moray is also a school with many pupils and may also need to expand in future. Would we be in the same situation again? The Polmont site has plenty of room to expand if needed and would be a facility to last a lifetime.”
- “My reasons for this preference are as follows:
 - Slightly closer to home and more easily accessible by public transport for myself.
 - Green space site;

- Quiet location - traffic noise and other outside sounds are a distraction for my son;
- Not part of any other establishment - relocating from adjacent to a High to adjacent to a Primary School could be a serious blow for the pupils' self esteem;
- Larger site has space for future expansion if required;
- Room for outdoor activities on-site ie woodland walks, gardening, other 'green' activities so actively encouraged;
- Facilities near at hand: supermarket and other shops in Polmont, Nursing home nearby, Sports Centre, Railway station, Library and Braes High School a short distance away;
- No traffic problems with another school, as transport is vital to Carrongrange pupils the congestion to residential streets can be avoided;
- Direct bus links to the centre of Falkirk;
- Outwith the 'blast zone' of Grangemouth;
- Away from the current 'fly' problem in Grangemouth (the source of which is close to the Moray site).

Of course the most important aspect of the success of a school is it's staff, but giving them and the pupils the best possible surroundings can only benefit everyone.

When we asked our son, currently beginning his school career in Carrongrange, for his opinion on a future location for the school he replied: "In a big empty space please". So I trust his opinion will also be recorded as a vote for Weedingshall site."
(2 RESPONSES FROM BOTH PARENTS BY EMAIL)

Staff

- "Closer to home for me. Nicer site - more potential on site to develop experiences for pupils, e.g. market garden, cafe etc."
- "Having seen both sites, and not knowing either area, it would seem that Weedingshall has more potential in terms of what could be achieved/built. Crucially the build must deliver what is necessary for the students to develop in the coming years."
- "Weedingshall - Grounds for outdoor learning - nature; tranquil setting. Possibility of cycle paths, woodland walks. Area around Moray Primary very undesirable for walking for many of our pupils. Moray Primary site - no scope for expansion."
- "My preferred option would be Weedingshall for the following reasons:
 - It's taken Carrongrange School a number of years to let the community know what we are - a secondary school for pupils with additional support for learning needs. If we were relocated to be on the same site as a Primary school, my greatest fear would be that the community (especially our parents/carers) would think that we were a primary school, or that our pupils were at the same level as the pupils in a primary school. It is a very difficult decision for our parents/carers to make (sending their child to Carrongrange,) and one of the positives that come from their visits to Carrongrange is their comments on how Carrongrange looks and feels like a secondary school provision.
 - There has also been some discussion on shared resources if we relocate to the ground beside Moray PS. Again my fear is that we would become an 'addition' to Moray PS - like a unit- instead of a leading example of a secondary special school.
 - Our whole curriculum is based on lifelong learning. We use the local community as a basis for all our 'real life' learning. Weedingshall has tremendous scope for out of school learning. There are grounds included in the site for taking forward our eco activities, our very good outdoor learning programme and of course the huge benefits for our pupils who require a sensory curriculum. We have recently invested in two specialist bikes for our more complex pupils, and the grounds at Weedingshall would be fabulous for them to use these independently and safely.

- The local area is also a huge benefit. There is a garden centre which is local, the new Helix project and the local amenities that Polmont, Laurieston and Falkirk can offer, including a sports centre, local churches, supermarkets and cafes. There are bus stops which are within easy walking distance for our more able pupils which offer a good regular bus service. We would however need more minibuses (including a designated driver) to enable our more complex pupils to access the local amenities- we would need this for the Moray site as well.
- The Weedingshall site would allow us to become a 'hub' in the community. We could set up our community projects e.g. the cafe, fixing bikes etc. as there is lots of space for additional opportunities."
- "This site would give us the opportunity to teach in a more imaginative, creative way using the site as the backdrop for a special place to learn. The problems of local access & community at Weedingshall will be solvable with creative planning & targeted funding."
- "Polmont site is a fresh canvas - lots of opportunities for developments. Squeezing another school into a site containing a Unit, a Primary and a Nursery provision is not a good idea. Our pupils need adult role models which they won't get here from younger pupils. Congestion on the roads at peak times would be difficult to manage at the Grangemouth site also."
- "I prefer Weedingshall because it has better grounds for walks and less traffic congestion. But I would like to know why the Council doesn't build another High School to accommodate the overspill from Larbert High and leave Carrongrange where it is?"
- "Much better setting for our pupils and is still close to amenities"
- "My preferred location would be – Weedingshall in Polmont. Comments –
1) Weedingshall is a very central setting. I believe this site would benefit the school as a whole due to the position. Although a slightly rural site, there are numerous villages within a very short distance. There would also be good and easy links to the Helix. Pupils (and staff) could also benefit from the parklands adjacent to the site;
2) One of the continual, regular comments about our current site is the lack of outdoor/green space and Weedingshall would be able to provide this;
3) My concerns re the Moray Primary site have also impacted on my choice. They are the location (within a very built up area, which is already very traffic heavy) and also the concern that Carrongrange could become known as 'a unit' linked to the primary school.
I would like to note that, from a personal point of view re travelling to work – I have no concerns re either site."
- "I feel that Weedingshall would be a much better site although new community links will need to be developed in Polmont and transport issues will need to be addressed as the site is a little more remote than the Moray site. I don't think either of these issues are deal breakers per se and I think that there is a fabulous opportunity to build a spectacular school at Weedingshall that will be complemented by the beautiful surroundings. Rather than the premise of the pupils being disadvantaged socially at this site, I am more of the opinion that other organisations (both community and education) will be attracted to develop links to the new school especially if becomes a centre of excellence for both design and education in the special needs field of education."

Responses from those in favour of the Moray Primary School location

Pro-forma responses and e-mails

The written comments attached to those responses received that were in favour of the location beside Moray Primary School are shown below:

Parents

- "I think that the above ticked choice is a good choice because it has more chance of being on a bus route which is a big help if you have no transport and want to attend any assemblies, prize giving, parent's nights, etc."
- "A bit too far away both sites but nearer of the two is best. Your taxi/bus to school for the pupils bill is going to increase a lot."
- "Central location. As my son goes to Carrongrange now one of his favourite things is to go out for walks and it is very helpful for the kids to go to the shops etc. to learn about money. Only problem will be the traffic."
- "Weedingshall is on a very busy road and not much space and would be difficult on exiting, and it's not near my home where Grangemouth is and it's much nearer amenities and is much larger for a decent car park which Carrongrange has."
- "It's more rural in Polmont, plus in winter time it's easier to get to. I don't like the idea it's (*Weedingshall*) not got easy pedestrian access to nearby facilities."
- "The site I would prefer is Moray Primary in Grangemouth. Think it's safer to get to especially in winter. Wouldn't like to be going up the Salmon Inn hill at winter. It also has easy access to libraries, parks, town centre and motorways."
- "We feel that money would be lost on the school building to make Weedingshall grounds accessible for all. Also the environment surrounding Weedingshall is very hilly.
The community around Moray Primary should lead to improved educational community events."
- "Mainly because of the distance to our home."
- "My son attended Carrongrange for the last six years leaving in June this year. He benefitted enormously from the skills, abilities and care of the teaching staff and never once had a 'bad' day. I have been a member of the Parent Council during those years becoming chair for the last two. Whilst there is some sadness in leaving the current building I feel it is more important to identify the strengths of the current school and amplify the elements that make Carrongrange so special to the new sites. As a parent there were two key elements that made Carrongrange stand out to me, namely:
 - Quality of teaching support and the ability to access the specialist facilities required on an individual basis.
 - Developing learning and development through active participation in activities outside of the school.
 The school has worked hard in developing links with many local organisations to the benefit of the pupils but also in building a positive image of the school within the Stenhousemuir/Larbert community. Some of these may well be lost with the move but it is not irreplaceable.
 Both sites have their distinct merits and due to their differing profiles present visions of almost different styles of school, one secluded and peaceful, the other busy and central. It all comes down to choosing the site that can be best developed to provide your preferred vision.
 My preference is to develop the land alongside Moray Primary school.
 My reasons for preferring this site are:
 - The flat regular nature of the land allows greater creativity of design and facilities whilst minimising infrastructure expenditure.

- Closer links with local secondary school, parks, sports facilities and shops. The hillside nature of Weedingshall also makes outside travel more difficult for wheelchair bound and less mobile pupils.
 - Central location within Grangemouth.
 - Ability to forge links with local community organisations as most would be a short walk away.
 - The site will give more flexibility for the school to 'future-proof' itself against new legislation, pupil profile and advances in teaching practice.
- The Moray site does present some potential congestion challenges but these should not be insurmountable if the site, including the other schools, is considered as a whole and creativity applied.

In summary I would prefer the land alongside Moray PS as I feel it represents the best site to build a school that is proud to provide an education for those with a wide range of learning and physical difficulties in a community it actively participates in."

- "Closer to the community, shops and amenities"
- "I think the Weedingshall location is too remote for out of school activity in the local community and its proximity to the cemetery is unacceptable. The proposed building of a distillery nearby detracts from the suitability of the site regardless of its other benefits."
- "Grangemouth is much closer to where we live. I do not drive and would find Polmont would be difficult to reach using public transport"
- "It is near where I stay"
- "Grangemouth is closer for pupils and Weedingshall is far too hilly for the buses in the winter"
- "I think the Weedingshall location is too remote for out of school activity in the local community and its proximity to the cemetery is unacceptable. The proposed building of a distillery nearby detracts from the suitability of the site regardless of its other benefits"
- "I'm writing to you in the capacity of the parents of (*two children*) at Carrongrange School. With regard to the site selection of the new Carrongrange School we both would prefer the grounds of Moray primary as the new location with two conditions, no sharing of facilities between Carrongrange and Moray and a guarantee of strong links to Grangemouth High. We both feel it is more central and easier located to local community services i.e. shops, cafes, library etc., where learning to live after school can be taught that our children need."

Staff

- "I prefer this location as I think that integrating with the Community and Social skills is very important for our pupils at Carrongrange School. There would be more choices and venues accessible for mild/moderate and severe/complex children."
- "I Feel Carrongrange should remain where it is and a new site for Larbert High should be found. Polmont is excluding the kids from society i.e. no local community handy, no high school nearby. Very limited wheelchair access and busy dangerous roads. Moray School is within a local community which benefits the kids."
- "Easy walking access to shops, park, sports centre and buses. Level ground for wheelchair users. Weedingshall is too isolated."
- "Moray is a far better option because the pupils would still be integrated in a community. Weedingshall is too alienated and won't do for the majority of pupils who need the social understanding that a community gives. Also, accessibility for wheelchairs is far easier than Polmont. No consideration given to SFLA's who are working and having to push chairs around Polmont area."

- “Pupils would benefit being close to the heart of Grangemouth, being close to all the amenities and being part of the community, and easy access for pupils with physical difficulties as Grangemouth is a flat area.”
- “We feel Weedingshall is too far away from the community. In bad weather we would not be able to attend and may even get snowed in. Won't be able to be part of a community and no places to take less able children for days out. If they are at Grangemouth they are more part of the community and can attend the Grangemouth Fair, and more opportunities.”
- “I have concerns as to the area outwith Weedingshall; Fast roads, no suitable pavements, no real community round about the planned site. Moray on the other hand is central to everything; Town centre, sports centre, swimming pool, stadium and so on. The area surrounding the school is flat and much more suitable for the young people who use wheelchairs to get around. Also, Grangemouth is an established community with the potential to offer new and varied options for pupils of Carronrange.”
- “Weedingshall is unsuitable due to its isolation for all pupils; the walk to local amenities is too dangerous due to narrow pavements and impossible for wheelchairs passing pedestrians or other wheelchair users. Moray Primary is far from ideal as it does not allow links to other high schools easily but cafes, shops etc. which are vital for almost all Carronrange pupils are easier to access. Moray Primary is much more inclusive and would allow greater links with the community which is vital for pupils who have additional support needs.”

Responses from those with no preference, or not in favour of the relocation

Pro-forma responses and e-mails

The written comments attached to those responses received that did not express a preference for either site, or were not in favour of the relocation:

From groups and organisations:

- (Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) (Falkirk Branch))

The Falkirk branch of the teacher's union EIS responded as follows:
“Proposal to Relocate Carronrange School”

Following our President's committee meeting, it is the overwhelming view of the EIS local Association Executive Committee that neither of the above sites meet the educational needs of Carronrange School community and neither offer any advantage over the present site. The school has invested heavily in developing close links with the community in Larbert and Stenhousemuir and these will be negated at a stroke if the school is forced to relocate.

Land Adjacent to Moray PS

If Carronrange school relocates to this site, it breaks the links with a secondary school, a valuable link which has built up over a number of years and a link which HMIE highlighted in their last report on the school (published 23 January 2007*) as a development point.

The senior pupils would require to be transported to Grangemouth High School to access National 4 level classes.

This site encourages the perception of a link with a Primary School rather than with a high school.

There is a concern that, with the proximity of Oxbang School, Carronrange School, over the course of time, will be perceived as a "Behaviour" setting rather than a school for pupils with severe/complex/moderate needs.

The site is very busy at the start and end of the pupil day with taxis and cars dropping off and picking up pupils at Moray PS, Moray Nursery class, Oxbang School and if relocated here, Carronrange pupils, all of whom are transported to school.

Currently 6th year pupils at Carronrange School are allowed the independence to go to Stenhousemuir Shopping Centre during lunchtime. We are of the opinion that the Charlotte Dundas centre is inappropriate for pupils to access. The main shopping area in Grangemouth is too far away and involves negotiating too many busy roads. Carronrange School has forged excellent relationships with local businesses and the community in Stenhousemuir and Larbert.

The site is further from Forth Valley Hospital for Accident and Emergency Services. Furthermore, some pupils have profound medical conditions which require urgent medical treatment.

Weedingshall in Polmont

There are no schools of any description nearby for Carronrange School to make links. Young people would require transport to access National 4 level classes at either Braes, Grangemouth or Graeme High Schools.

This is a very remote site with no community surrounding the site with which the pupils could engage. Presently pupils can easily access a variety of workplaces and community amenities in and around Larbert and Stenhousemuir for work experience. There are no easily accessible local amenities.

The site is adjacent to a cemetery. Given the health of some of the pupils attending Carronrange, this site appears to us as extremely insensitive to the pupils, their parents and staff who care and educate these young people.

This site is further from Forth Valley Hospital for Accident and Emergency Services. Furthermore, some pupils have profound medical conditions which require urgent medical treatment.

The pavement along the very busy main road is unsuitable for wheelchair use and for ambulant pupils. It is narrow, there is a steep uphill approach to Polmont and the surface of the pavement is very uneven.

We have concerns regarding the security of the site, with particular reference to pupils who abscond - the proximity of the motorway, the very busy main Falkirk/Polmont road and the fact that there are 2 burns which border the site. There would be no independence for 6th year pupils at lunchtime.

* 'A few pupils had benefited from links to the neighbouring mainstream secondary school, but this aspect was under-developed.' HMIe Report p2."

From individuals:

Parents

- "I have just read the article in the Falkirk Herald regarding the plans for Carronrange School. My son was a previous pupil at Carronrange and although he was anxious when he moved from the primary school to such a large school however the support received was great.
One of the other issues I had when he moved to the high school was the travel/transport. Carronrange School is centrally based within Falkirk Council. I would not have considered my son having to travel to Grangemouth or Polmont which are on the furthest easterly aspects of the council area. (we live in Denny)
I would also like to raise concern that the article has identified that this move is to accommodate Larbert High School. Although I understand the increased need, why are the mainstream pupils being placed before the needs of the pupils with additional support needs yet again? When my son attended the school consistency in education but also environment was needed. One of the areas proposed is next to a primary school, however my son benefited from the small amount of social interaction with his peer group from Larbert High. The other area would isolate the pupils even further!!!
Although my son is now an adult therefore no longer a pupil at Carronrange, I wish to have it noted that I am very disappointed in the ongoing discrimination towards individuals with additional support needs and their families."
- "As a parent of a child who attended Rossvail School from 1984 to 1999, as a former teacher of Carronrange School (I retired in 2009) and as a taxpayer, I am concerned

about the proposed move of Carrongrange School to Weedingshall or the area beside Moray Primary.

I think that Weedingshall would be particularly unsuitable as it would be turning the clock back by hiding these pupils out of sight of the community. There are no secondary or even primary schools close by Weedingshall. After years of movement towards integration why was an isolated site like Weedingshall ever considered suitable? When Dawson Park was closed Carrongrange was built beside Larbert High School to facilitate integration. Carrongrange has only been at the site for 13 years and in that time had built up links with the wider community. At Weedingshall this would prove more difficult given the physical isolation of that site. It would be quite a distance for staff and pupils to walk to local shops, supermarkets and cafes which are an integral part of the pupil's social education. For parents and staff who have to rely on public transport Weedingshall would involve a long walk from the nearest bus stop.

The move to a site next to Moray Primary in Grangemouth would be better and hopefully links could be made with Grangemouth High. As this site would be close to shops, parks and cafes, it would be easier to become part of an established community and become a visible part of that community. However it would have been better if a new Carrongrange was built beside a secondary school as Carrongrange is a secondary school and at present there is a connecting door between Carrongrange and Larbert High. In this respect the move to land next to Moray Primary is not a move forward.

When a new Graeme High and Falkirk High were built they were positioned next to the original sites but when it comes to Carrongrange and Larbert High, it is Carrongrange that has to move. There seems to be one rule for mainstream pupils and one for others with additional support needs. The Curriculum for Excellence requires pupils to become confident and successful learners. To achieve this pupils must be able to relate to others and they have to link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations. It also requires pupils to become responsible citizens and effective contributors. To achieve this pupils have to show respect for others and have to be able to work in partnership and teams. For Carrongrange pupils to achieve all these objectives would necessitate meeting and interacting socially with others, especially those of a similar age group. Such groups are most readily found in nearby schools and community.

As mentioned above the Weedingshall site meets some of these criteria and the Moray Primary site offered a poorer arrangement than the present Carrongrange site. To restrict the consultation to consideration of two sites, one of which is wholly inappropriate and the other a less good option than the present location, is extremely disappointing. Once again it seems that those with additional support needs are being treated as second class citizens."

- "I am ok with new school"
- "When the suggestion of a new school for Carrongrange pupils came up I was optimistic and excited about seeing what could be offered for a school currently described as "A Centre of Excellence".

The staff and curriculum along with the dedication and drive from a number of sources would surely combine with this new school to provide the kind of learning environment that the young people who attend Carrongrange not only need but deserve.

What I am hearing and reading is that site possibilities have been whittled down to 2 sites which it would appear are of little value to the council and are sites that no one else wants. They are both situated on the outskirts of communities in undesirable locations.

I'm sure you will be given lists of pros and cons for both sites and to be honest I can see little point to me adding to those, except for

1.- both of the proposed sites offer very restricted access and egress for pupils with limited mobility, and for the staff who have to push them about in wheelchairs. In effect this means no reasonable opportunity to walk anywhere with the pupils and

2.-No direct / shared link with a secondary school.

What I want to say is that the message I am getting is that Falkirk Council does not see these young people as an investment. If it did, they would be investing in providing us with a higher quality/ higher monetary value site, increasing the young peoples' social standing and providing real opportunity for community inclusion, enterprise, education and life through transition beyond school rather than camouflaging a requirement to provide more space for Larbert High School as some sort of new start for Carronrange.

I am sure there are sites of more worth available to Falkirk Council which would give both the council and ourselves the chance to put these young people in the spotlight and on a pedestal as an example of what Falkirk Council should be seeing as a valuable commodity and worthwhile investment. I can only dream of the potential such a site would provide. Something like the Dollar Park area would provide opportunity for education and enterprise development. Schooling, cafes, shops and enterprising activities possibly even going beyond our current provision and into school leavers could be an exciting and worthwhile venture.

We have had limited success on a smaller scale of this but with a central site and backing and investment from the council it could be a massive opportunity.

We need the opportunity to be a community within a community, not a community on the outskirts of a community. Many Victorian sanatoriums were set in nice grounds on the outskirts of communities, I do not want this for the young people at Carronrange and it's what I feel we are being offered.

I also wonder if the local residents of our current school have been consulted with about the increase of pupil numbers that will occur when Larbert High take over our site. There will undoubtedly be more pupils than our current 170 occupying the building and unlike our pupils, they will not be bussed in on a limited number of buses. Each pupil will have transport putting pressure on an already over-burdened road/ drop off area. The local village and surrounding area will have increased lunch use and increased littering and the local residents will have even more problems accessing their drives at school start and finish times.

In all, this is probably only a sticking plaster for a bigger and more permanent problem of increased housing putting demands on secondary school placements.

Surely there is a need to look at the long-term problem and compulsory re-zoning of secondary schools.

I am aware that the meetings and parental input for this consultation have been not best attended and small in number and it is easy to interpret the lack of voice means the lack care or concern over this relocation. These young people are the most vulnerable in Falkirk Council and their parents the most in need of a stronger voice and the backing and trust of their local authority.

I therefore do not agree with either site proposal."

Staff

- "As a fairly recent retiree from Carronrange, I hope that in deciding the plot for the new school you will take the needs of the pupils into consideration.

1. They need to be part of a community - not hidden away to be forgotten about.
2. They need public support for coffee mornings, services etc.
3. They need to be able to walk to amenities e.g.
 - a) for a cafe to learn how to behave well in public.
 - b) for shops - to practice using money and reading/choosing food by labels.
 - c) for walks etc. without the need for a mini-bus.
 - d) for access to help others e.g. sheltered housing
(the youth and the elderly need one another.)

They do not deserve to be hidden away like in Weedingshall as if they were part of an asylum hidden away from public view. They have learning difficulties not a mental illness, therefore they need to learn to participate in the world and to be as equal as they are able."

- “The pupils at Carrongrange School would not benefit from either site.
1. Land at Moray Primary – Far too busy and congested area. Two other schools on site (Oxgang and Moray Primary school). Nowhere close to amenities.
2. (*Weedingshall*) Not an appropriate site for wheelchairs. The pupils would need to be transported in buses wherever they went.”
- “Weedingshall is not attached to any High school which does not allow any level of integration for pupils. It is not part of a community as it is not near any facilities i.e. shops, cafes etc. I feel like the children would be very isolated.
Moray School - There doesn't appear to be a lot of land to make this proposal viable. Carrongrange is a high school facility and therefore should be either near or attached to a high school to allow them full access to all the curriculum. It seems to me to be inappropriate to be beside a primary facility.
I also think that traffic would be a major concern as all pupils who attend Carrongrange are transported by either bus or taxi.
I also think that the lack of outdoor space would be a problem as well. Sports Day and Outdoor activities would be impossible as the playing fields are being done away with to allow this new school to be built.
There has to be other options for this. I am not opposed to a new school far from it, but I would like it for all the right reasons and the location is the biggest factor. The council must have more appropriate land to build this.”
- “Do not think any of these sites are suitable. Weedingshall is too far from community or other amenities. Moray Primary wrong community. Pupils need to look towards an adult environment.”
- “I don't think either site is suitable. Weedingshall too isolated. Moray Primary wrong community. We need to be near a secondary school.”
- “Weedingshall is far too isolated for our pupils and Moray site does not offer any more than what we have already.
- “I do not believe that either site is suitable and that other areas/sites should be reconsidered to get the best for the children both present and in future. Weedingshall is very isolated, it slopes, and is in the grounds of a cemetery which would disturb our children. Moray Primary is a large primary school, behaviour school and has a large nursery. The students need to be with their own age peers.”

Other Members of the Public

- “The pupils at Carrongrange School would not benefit from any of the above site. 1. Land at Moray Primary - far too busy and congested area, two other schools on site e.g. Oxgang and Moray Primary. Nowhere close to amenities. 2. Not an appropriate site for wheelchairs. The pupils would need to be transported in buses wherever they went.”
- “Don't think either sites would be appropriate for the needs of our children at Carrongrange School.”
- “I was concerned to read online of possible plans to demolish Weedingshall House, Polmont to build a new school.
The building is a lovely early Victorian house and as such is part of Scotland's Heritage. In 1989 Charles Scott Moncrieff, soldier, scholar and world famous translator of Proust was born there. His portrait hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh.
More recently it was a Children's Home and houses cherished memories of people who went here: see the web site
<http://books.dreambook.com/polwarth/polmont.html>
It was obviously a happy place and challenges the media view of Children's Homes.
Should the site be chosen as the new one for the proposed school, it would be a



better idea to preserve the history and incorporate this valuable old building into the new school rather than demolishing it.
You would save not only its historic and educational value but also the atmosphere of a happy place for children.”



APPENDIX B: MINUTES

Public Meeting at Moray Primary School on 17th September 2013

In attendance from the Council:

Councillor Alan Nimmo	Education Portfolio Holder
Nigel Fletcher (NF)	Acting Director of Education (Educational Support & Improvement)
Gary Greenhorn (GG)	Acting Director of Education (Educational Planning & Resources)
Richard Teed (RF)	Senior Forward Planning Officer
Andrew Facherty (AF)	ASL Manager
Jennifer Anderson	Forward Planning Officer (minute taker)

Other officers and members of the public in attendance:

Gillian Robertson, Head Teacher, Carrongrange School, Ghislaine Tait, HT Moray Primary School, and 36 members of the public including Carrongrange School parents and staff, Parent Council representatives and other interested parties.

A "questions and answer" session followed a 15 minute presentation from Gary and Richard at the start of the meeting.

Question:

The first questions relates to both sites. Would the facilities at both sites be the same as those we have and be included in the building on the new site?

Answer:

GG: As part of the school design we have to look at what works well in the current Carrongrange school and what doesn't. Facilities deemed appropriate would be included in the design at either site. Both sites are big enough for a school to be built. However, the sites would offer different complexities to design and different layouts of school but we would be looking to transfer what the current facilities Carrongrange has to both sites in whole or in part. If there are things in Carrongrange which are not needed then we would not transfer them.

Question:

Would either site be able to incorporate a separate assembly hall and a separate dining hall?

Answer:

GG: Yes, our requirements of a 2 hectare site would include them both. Some schools prefer to have keep them separate and some amalgamated but the school design team will decide this.

Question:

What facilities could be shared between Carrongrange and Moray Primary School.

Answer:

GG: We have not really looked at this yet as we are still at the site selection stage but if the school is built on the Moray PS site there would be a potential if the schools wished, to share facilities. For example, a multi-use games area. Traditionally, those built by the Council are 20 x 30 metres. Moray PS currently use the playing fields, but not all of them. If they wished to create a separate area, say, for athletics, this could perhaps be included in the design.

Question:

This relates to Weedingshall - can a separate entrance or exit from the main road be made to stop pupils and visitors being caught up in funerals as some pupils may have terminal conditions?

Answer:

GG: Our preference would be to have a separate entrance for any new school built at Weedingshall. We would need to liaise with the roads people on this. At St Bernadette's, we installed a new roundabout, traffic calming measures and quite extensive additional

works were put in around the school to facilitate a separate entrance and exit. Extra parking was installed because some parking problems existed.

Statement:

I am the chair of the Council for Moray PS and I know it is an issue raised at every meeting we have. Moray place is carnage at 9 in the morning and even with staggered times it is a problem.

Response:

GG: The initial question asked was about Weedingshall but I will respond regarding Moray Primary School. The entrance would not be where it currently is. We would move the current wall back approximately 10 metres to create additional parking space and create an area where the main road is effectively widened and the entrance would come in from the main road. If Roads could do something to bring a separate road in to Moray and Oxbang schools then this would be looked at. It cannot be promised but we could try to do something that also sorts the problem of congestion on Moray Place.

Statement:

Knowing there is difficulty already you could perhaps have people who have kids with special needs that really need a direct access you could have people popping into that car park and your kids could walk around the corner.

Response:

GG: There are 2 needs here and the parents of Moray PS may ask that if we are going to put in a separate entrance then they may ask to piggy back. We can't promise but will look at this. If we are doing infrastructure work outside the school and can sort another school's problem at the same time then we will. It may help the residents as well if there are complaints. We have to take stock of the Carrongrange situation of dropping pupils fairly near the school, perhaps under a walk way to save getting wet and will look at that. NF: Moving back to Weedingshall, there are still some more questions submitted earlier.

Question:

What are the heights of chimney stacks or vents on the distillery site just north west of the proposed site and are they the same height of those proposed at the school?

Answer:

RT: The answer to this is not known and we will respond to that in the consultation report. We will consult with the experts in Abbotsford House and Falkirk Council on that one.

NOTE: This is addressed in Section 5 of this report as it couldn't be answered at the meeting.

NF: I would imagine the next question is the same and relates to the sight lines, pollution coming from the distillery and what is the likely level and worst case.

GG: Again we don't know as we have not looked at it.

Question:

Would there be any noise because the Weedingshall hall site is quiet?

Answer:

GG: We will ask the planning people who worked on this. They have not identified any issues however we will take some technical advice.

Question:

Would the full 4 hectares be available to the school to develop outdoor areas?

Answer:

GG: It is an open book. Any area is up to the school how they want to do it but there is a cost limit. We are comfortable that the money we have will provide or meet the needs of what people want however we must be pragmatic and if there are limiting factors they may come into play but at the moment, yes.

Question:

Obviously you have a cost issue but if land wasn't used, would that land be made available for future use to build on at a later date.

Answer:

GG: The whole site belongs to Education Services and we are in charge of what we do there. When building a school it is sometimes better to let it evolve and then through time especially with an open space, things change quite a lot, so yes, you are absolutely right, things can happen through time.

Question:

Is the cemetery planned to expand because it is a new cemetery? On the picture you have it is on the left hand side - I had heard that they were looking to develop that site as well. How would that affect the school?

Answer:

GG: The Council are looking to expand their cemetery sites. If they wanted to expand the site they would have to talk to us but any expansion would have to be on Education terms as we are possibly planning a school there. The school would have to be designed and built first before we would consider it. There are areas of the site which Education don't own, i.e. the area looking at the main road to the right running right down to the public path. If they want to develop there they would have to talk to us and get planning permission as it is a green field site. The Council is looking at a whole range of things to do with cemetery expansion but the key development of that site is the school, unless we decide to build at Moray PS.

Question:

Is it just along the back wall at Oxbang Road? (*referring to the siting of a school on the proposed Moray site*)

Answer:

RT: It could be built on any part of the land which is all within our ownership. From a design point of view it would be looked at in the next Phase, where the best place is in terms of access and whether access would come from Oxbang Road. It does provide a lot of options whereas at Weedingshall the shape of the site will define to some extent how the school would be built

Question:

Regarding the 2.9 hectares, is that the whole of a playing field size? How much you need to build on?

Answer:

RT: We were looking for sites that were 2 hectares and above so we would not necessarily need all 2.9 hectares so there is scope to leave playing fields at one end of the site and is big enough not to impact on the primary school but a large part of the site would be developed if the school was built here.

2 Questions:

- (1) When we attended the site visit, you said that Moray Primary could be provided with a multi-use facility. How much of the site would that take?
- (2) Can I ask about the Weedingshall site? Grandsable Road is very narrow for transport. The distillery which is meant to be a tourist site with more visitors coming there and coming down at the end of the day to that bad junction at Beancross. Already some road markings have changed to improve that but it is a very dangerous junction where the majority of the children at Carrongrange would go through that junction because it is the closest link to the motorway. Is there any way, when looking at planning, that this be taken into account? It is not adjacent to the site but for our children's safety that is going to be a big factor.

Answer:

GG: It has not been taken into consideration because we have not chosen that site. However what drives things forward is where there is a possible impact on the school. What has been muted is looking at a possible roundabout in that area.

Statement:

For a short period of time it will be very busy.

Response:

GG: If you look at what has been done at some of the sites for the current new High Schools and St Bernadette's, we have invested a lot in the infrastructure around it for cycle paths, lights, pavements, roundabouts, traffic calming. The Council has dipped into their pockets to do it and yes it will certainly be looked at.

Question:

Looking at Weedingshall at Polmont would you level the area as my son has a visual impairment and that would make it hard for him to walk on the area. Would it be levelled off? There are some places that have been very difficult for him.

Answer:

GG: Yes, some parts can be levelled and some can be left depending on what the school wants. There is an a bit of land at the back which is stepped and they may wish to retain for an outdoor learning area. The school will be involved in the design and will have a say if that area is to be levelled. The vast majority of that site would be levelled.

Statement:

My daughter is in a wheelchair and has a visual impairment as well so it would need to be level for the wheelchair.

Question:

Regarding the design what it is going to look like until we have seen an actual drawing and how it is all going to work out, when will you be in a position to show everybody and what is the position of site or location?

Answer:

GG: We intend taking a report to Committee to get formal approval then we can start to move on the design stage. The earliest designs would probably be available before the end of term in June 2014.

Question:

You won't see the designs until June 2014?

Answer:

GG: We are only looking at the preferred site. We are not looking at any design.

Question:

My question is, when will we actually see the design of the actual chosen site and what it will look like?

Answer:

GG: After the decision is made on what the preferred site is.

NF: Because the design of the school will depend on the site itself.

GG: If there were 10 sites we would not spend money doing 10 designs because the technical part of that is costly to do. The Council always waits until we agree with one site and then we start to do the design work on it.

Statement:

Surely it would be good to do a feasibility cost of developing both the locations.

Response:

GG: The feasibility is purely about the site being able to be built upon and the technical experts have said that both sites meet those requirements.

Question:

Is there need for another consultation on what it will look like then so that the local residents, in this area especially, can see where you are going to put the school on the site.

Answer:

GG: By law we are not required to do so in this consultation. What we are required to do is involve the local residents in the Planning application for it. In the lead up to it there would be an open evening showing 3 dimensional drawings and you can feed in your thoughts on it. We may have a choice of two or three locations for the school on site – here is what they would like – what is your preferred option? We would take that on board at the next stage to involve the residents.

Question:

If they decide Moray is going to go ahead, obviously it will take up the ground space. Whilst we don't have any objection to it being here, we would like to know whether we will have our own playing fields.

Answer:

GG: It is a huge area of land but we must use it in a way that suits both Moray PS and Carrongrange School. We would certainly have to talk to parents as part of this process. We do not have to engage local residents until the planning stage but I think it would be good practice to do it at the same time.

Statement:

I would like to make a proposal. I know that Falkirk Council supports inclusion and actually one of the big problems with either of the sites is that they are not, like Larbert High, next door to where the kids can go from one to the other back and forth and who do so regularly. Weedingshall is a huge distance away from any school so it is probably not possible. Grangemouth High according to your notes is 1km away. I think if we were to continue with that level of inclusion I would like some record of the amount of pupils at this present time that go back and forth every day and then take into account those 20 minutes spent getting that pupil into support involved from support for learning at the same time.

Statement:

Yes, the kids access Larbert High on a daily basis and I know that because I have spoken to parents and teachers and there is a fair amount of work that goes back and forth between the two areas. I think that inclusion is really important. We have had a discussion in the past and I think it is really important that we keep that inclusion up. It is part of Government policy and we need to consider that as part of the deal.

Response:

NF: It is an important part of this consultation that the issue is addressed as part of the process.

GG: We will look at what the inclusion links the school has with Larbert and see how best they can be accommodated in whichever site we chose.

Statement:

I suppose in times of cutbacks when Support for Learning Assistants you don't want to lose out on the education time that the child has because we are transporting 20 minutes for a wheelchair journey.

Statement:

I think it is important, as my child who has learning difficulties at the moment mixes with mainstream children and it gives him confidence as well. Every kid should have the entitlement to mix with mainstream children. They are still children, who still have to learn and play and some of the attitudes from peers or parents can reflect on the child themselves who can take it out on the child with the additional support needs. I have witnessed that myself with my son. I totally agree with inclusion otherwise kids are not going to learn how to deal with children with additional support needs and we are going to end up with the same attitude as the parent.

Response:

NF: I take that point.

Gillian Robertson (Headteacher, Carrongrange School): I hear everything this lady has said about inclusion. We do have some informal arrangements with a very small number of our pupils who do access Larbert High and that is done in a very supported and careful way. Larbert High pupils benefit hugely from us being next door and other opportunities there but because it is a very high priority for us, wherever the new Carrongrange is going to be it will be right up there and we will be doing everything we possibly can to make sure that inclusion stays. So I would like to assure you that whatever it takes, if it is additional mini buses or additional transport, whatever we can do to make sure that inclusion is very much up there and that your children and our pupils are supported in that way.

Statement:

It is 2013 now and unlike previous years when children with disabilities were regarded with the wrong attitude. Children like my son suffer because of that attitude and it reflects on the parents where children think that because he has a disability they won't talk to him because he is not like me. It is wrong and Moray School is really good at cutting out discrimination and I am so glad that Moray school gave my son a chance. I have a lot of thanks to the previous Head Teacher for giving my son a chance to be in the school and he is now integrated into a mainstream school and is doing really well, making improvements and it is all thanks to the EP part of the school.

Response:

NF: Thanked the parent for her comments and stated that the commitment will continue and it matters hugely as the Head Teacher was saying.

Statement:

The Vice-chairperson for Carrongrange School as well as principal teacher at Grangemouth High School with the responsibility for work experience introduced herself and her role on working with senior pupils, going out into primary schools and helping out in the community as sixth years do a lot of that. "I am particularly excited that Carrongrange School is potentially much closer to us at either site. I can see much more of a community in our understanding. Grangemouth HS has an additional support centre, with autistic children where they are integrated in the mainstream who still have a safety net there."

Statement:

My daughter is at Carrongrange School, attended Moray PS and has been to enhanced provision. I didn't have the same experience with her being included and happy here at Moray PS, to the extent that I took her out because she was bullied. I do see the other side. She wanted inclusion and is a very happy child in a special school because there isn't that stigma. There should be choice but every child is different and what will suit your child to come into mainstream is great but to my daughter it would have been so detrimental for her. I couldn't wait to get her away as she is accepted for her herself when she is not at school and in school she is very happy.

Statement:

I think it is really important that our children are included and they do have access to a high school. Regarding the site, personally I am unhappy with being so far out at Weedingshall. I think it is a beautiful site and here (Moray PS) I am not particularly happy about being next to a primary school because our kids need role models of a secondary school. Even although Grangemouth HS is close it has been good being next to Larbert HS and having the role models of the secondary pupils. As I live in the area, has the old Falkirk HS site been looked at as it remains derelict?

Response:

GG: The old Falkirk High site has been earmarked for other uses in the same way that the old St Mungo's High site where they have started building affordable housing and at Grangemouth HS.

Statement:

I was speaking with someone in planning and they were sure that the site hadn't been assigned in the interim.

Response:

NF: Stated that it was probably best not to get distracted into that kind of debate as Council has already agreed that it will be one of the 2 sites and the decision relates to what is the best provision you can get out of the 2 sites.

Question:

Will there be an opportunity for you, in your design and planning stage, especially the design stage, to get parents and all sides involved in how it is going to look, what they need, what their requirements are?

Answer:

GG: That is already being done. There have been early meetings to discuss the need and that is to be factored in. The Head Teacher has been advised that the staff should decide how they want to input to the design process. We have said to the Parent Council that they can decide how they want to feed in as they have representation at the design team meeting as well.

Question:

If you have it earmarked for Moray PS will they have input to the design process?

Answer:

GG: If the Moray site is selected we will talk to Moray PS Head Teacher who is present, and the Chairperson of the Parent Council to see how they want it to feature and if that also involves liaising with local residents then we can explore that. We will not state what you are getting but advise what the parameters are. In going through a process like this, there are always aspirations that may need to be lowered but once people are around the table you can see the parameters you are working within. We are also liaising with Renfrewshire Council who are building a similar school and both authorities will feed into each other's design.

Question:

There has been quite a lot of comments about the integration of educational facilities that support the current Carronrange and this means transposing that to here and to working with other communities and local services which would be very positive for either of the two sites. With regards to the Moray site as you already have Oxbang School and Moray PS is there any longer term plan to redevelop these facilities?

Answer:

GG: There is no current plan to redevelop facilities. If the option was to choose this site what might come out is a natural recalibration of the way both facilities use the site. Shared facilities could be built around the new campus and it might change the dynamics of the current two schools use of the facilities they have. Stephen, who is the retired chair of the Carronrange Parent Council and Neil, who is the current Chair (*both present at the meeting*) were both involved in the site selection process from start to finish.

Statement:

It would make a lot of sense if this site was chosen to take on all comments which we have just heard to ensure that in a major sense the softer sense of the physical links, cycle paths and all these things as you have a great infrastructure.

Response:

GG: The Head Teacher is in the audience tonight and is listening to this so she will be involved in that process as well as the Parent Council.

Question:

For this school, if this site isn't chosen for Carronrange can we expect to see houses being built on the fields?

Answer:

GG: I can't answer that but the site was earmarked for affordable housing.

Question:

Is that the same for Weedingshall? If you only use 2.5 hectares out of 4, what would be the uses for the other 1.5 hectares and is it up for grabs?

Answer:

GG: The difference here is that the site here was already earmarked for affordable housing and has been in the Local Plan. The Weedingshall site has never been there. If there was an area at Weedingshall lying empty they would have to go through the planning consultation process to change it whereas the Moray site has already had that.
RT: If the land at Weedingshall was chosen the remaining land would not be built on and the school could expand into it for recreational and leisure facilities. It is all green belt and there are limited options on that land. The prime development land at Weedingshall would be taken up by the school.

Nigel Fletcher thanked everyone for attending the meeting which closed at 8:00 pm.



Public Meeting at Carrongrange School on 24th September 2013

In attendance from the Council :

Councillor Alan Nimmo	Education Portfolio Holder
Nigel Fletcher (NF)	Acting Director of Education (Educational Support & Improvement)
Gary Greenhorn (GG)	Acting Director of Education (Educational Planning & Resources)
Richard Teed (RF)	Senior Forward Planning Officer
Alan Livingstone (AL)	Property Development Manager
Jennifer Anderson	Forward Planning Officer (minute taker)

Other officers and members of the public in attendance:

Gillian Robertson, Head Teacher, Carrongrange School, and 18 members of the public including Carrongrange School parents and staff.

A “questions and answer” session followed a 15 minute presentation from Gary and Richard at the start of the meeting.

Question:

On the Grangemouth site is there a link to the existing primary school to share gate access?

Answer:

GG: At the Grangemouth site there are two schools, Oxbang School and Moray Primary School and both are attached. There is also a nursery class and an independent playgroup on site. An opportunity is there to share as little or as much of the facilities as wanted. In terms of the access, we will have to take the access back from the main road and create a drop off point with a separate entrance and we may at the same time create another entrance to Moray PS. We will need to liaise with our colleagues in Roads on this.

Question:

What about the Oxbang site access?

Answer:

GG: We would need to improve the access and exit as it is a narrow road.

Statement:

Regarding the Weedingshall site, there is nothing within walking distance for the children whereas at the moment they have access to the community centre, ASDA and they would not be able to walk to facilities.

Response:

GG: In terms of the walking distance, there is a shopping precinct in Polmont which is not too far but the route is down and up a hill, but it is on a major bus route.

RT: Polmont shopping centre is not far away but the Weedingshall site is less accessible to the local facilities than the Moray site.

Statement:

We do use a lot of the local area in Larbert to take the pupils out and about and they have access to the local hotel and use café facilities.

Response:

NF: There are positives and negatives to both sites and you have to balance your own perceptions as to which you prefer. A lot depends on what you are looking for.

GG: The Greenpark community centre is not too far away and near the centre there is church hall which is used as a café during the day. The community hall is also on the same site. This centre is used well in the community and pupils could have access to the centre. The shopping centre is next to this.

AN: There is also a sports centre in Polmont as well and a library.

Question:

Are questions restricted to location at the moment or facilities as well?

Answer:

NF: No, it is both but there will be more issues to do with facilities in the next phase which will be the design part but ask any questions you want.

Question:

From a location point of view, the site at Weedingshall is a much larger area of land. In relation to the scope for building in comparison to the current facilities here, for example the swimming pool, the hydro pool etc. is there sufficient land and sufficient planning requirements at the Moray site for that?

Answer:

GG: The Moray site is bigger as it is a flat site and is bigger for a building whereas the Weedingshall site has more land but the land slopes down to the east. Both sites in terms of what we can build on would give the provision the school needs.

Question:

Does the budget facilitate like for like on what we have at the moment and what are they going to get in facilities?

Answer:

GG: The Scottish Futures Trust who have built over 40 schools in Scotland and allow 30 square metres per pupil for a special school, based on the current building indices that are available. They have agreed to fund half and the Council will fund the other half.

Question:

Is it still going to have a swimming pool, a hydra pool and the facilities it has at the moment? Obviously Larbert HS will gain quite well from what is here at the moment and I am unsure as I am not a parent, but will hopefully be a parent next year, I have seen the facilities here which are excellent and I want to be assured that the same facilities are going to be provided. There were several things like the pool, the hydra pool and there is even a glass kiln which I think came across at the visiting day as being very important to the children and I would like clarification and if these types of things are going to move or will they stay in Larbert HS. Have parents or school funds contributed to any of these purchases such as the Kiln because if they have, if Larbert HS is going to maintain them all, then surely they should contribute to something to introduce another new facility.

Answer:

GG: The purpose of tonight's meeting is about the site selection. Notwithstanding that, at the design stage we will also get the view of staff and the parents. If they say that it is critical to have a hydro-therapy pool, a pool, a kiln then that is what we will try to do. The size of these things will change but if people are saying it is a priority for the school then that is what we will try to have built into the design. Things have moved on a lot in terms of the use of hydro-therapy pools, size and dynamics of it from when the school was built so we will have to take cognisance of this.

Gillian Robertson (GR), Carrongrange School Headteacher: The kiln was bought through donations from fund raising. The second kiln was already here.

Question:

Would you be allowed to take it with you?

Answer:

GR: This question has not been asked but perhaps it could be answered now.

Staff member: No, it is not being taken and will stay where it is.

GR: Will this be factored into the design of the new school?

GG: Yes. Whether you have one or two kilns will be decided as part of the priorities and will be factored in.

Statement:

If you are going to build a purpose built school to build it right from the start. You are in the situation now because Larbert HS wasn't built big enough so you don't want the same

thing happening again. You want this new school to be purpose built for everything that is required and somewhere down the line it would cause problems if it wasn't built in at the start.

Response:

GG: We have said that if there are items which the school fund has purchased then the school has ownership of these items and the school can decide to take them or not.

Statement:

I think it is only fair and accurate to point out the social and community links we have here at the school and to say that they will continue is falling far short of what we have got just now at the school. The second point about the isolation of Weedingshall site and the distance of the Moray site from the town centre is being under estimated to get young people to places. We struggle physically pushing some of the large chairs and children and we are not talking about primary school children but young adults, and it is a big cost to staff transporting kids around physically. Another thing is the cost of the transport. Just now we are having to negotiate in getting drivers of buses to take kids places and to have such an isolated site there would need to be some guarantee that there was a budget to support the transport the children are getting just now. It is quite considerable the amount of out of school access that they are depending on for curriculum.

Response:

GG: It was useful at the Moray meeting that one of the principal teachers from Grangemouth HS was there and the same question was asked. They are quite excited on the possibility of having the school foster links between them. The school is not far away and also develop and foster links in the community. It was quite a strong statement and they would be looking to see what they could do to support the school and help them to integrate with children at Grangemouth HS. The same would apply to the primary school where the Parent Council at Moray is in favour of the site and would also try to develop links. Fostering the community links is one where it is really up to the school to try and do but there is a lot of opportunities within the area with industry and commerce.

Statement:

We would be starting from scratch and it is been in the past a lot to take on. We are not a primary school but to suggest that there are links with a primary school suggests that there is educational value to that. Our young people may have curricular needs that are part of a primary curriculum but they certainly don't have social needs that on a par.

Response:

GR: The question that was asked last week about inclusion and links with mainstream secondary schools and what I said last week was that as a Head Teacher that inclusion and integration is very much part and parcel of what we would want to do and I would certainly do everything in making sure that happens. I think there are issues about transport and we will need to engage some extra drivers but that is obviously what we will have to do.

GG: The linkage to the primary school I was talking about was in relation to developing a play area which can be shared with Carrongrange. There are quite a few design opportunities on site to share amongst all parties.

Statement:

I do understand there are good aspects to that but as a parent I have the experience of what it is like trying to integrate a young person into a community and to have them be part of that community. Part of that peer group, and if we are linking all the younger children then society tends to think that is all the older children are capable of. I think it is really important that they are seen as part of the community and part of secondary education.

Response:

GG: You are correct and we must make sure there are linkages there.

Question:

You said the Weedingshall site was a good site (*for building*) but some parts of it are not because of the contours of the land. What is the percentage of the land which is not suitable?

Answer:

RT: About half of the site can be disregarded for building or car parks but that is not saying that that part of the land cannot be used for something. It can be used for recreational opportunities. The other half is a mainly flat area which would be used for building the school and other areas which slope to a lesser degree would be used for other outdoor purposes.

Question:

The reason I asked that question is Falkirk District is one of the fastest growing parts of Scotland and perhaps Weedingshall is better for expansion rather than a restrictive area like Moray where there are houses around it.

Answer:

GG: There is enough space on both sites for expansion so for example the current roll from last year's census was 157 and it is planned to increase to about 180. The current school was designed based on the Central Region model when pupils came from Stirling and Clackmannanshire but as budgets took over the numbers coming dropped to zero which is why the school roll dropped and we have surplus capacity.

Question:

Is that 250 pupils based on a mainstream ratio or a special need ratio?

Answer:

GG: It is a capacity figure.

Question:

When they moved from Dawson Park they were secondary and a primary but now there are no primary numbers. In a mainstream setting you are talking to 1 teacher to about 25. We are never going to have 25 kids in a class.

Answer:

GG: We would want it to be on a ratio 1:10. When it is built we would have to make sure we had those provisions included.

RT: The capacity referred to is based on the teacher pupil ratio which you have at Carrongrange. The school could accommodate much more pupils.

Statement:

We have 14 wheelchair users here just now and it one of the things raised was that if you have a swimming pool of a certain size that classrooms might be reduced. I know that there are budget constraints and with 14 wheelchair users trying not to discriminate which classes you could possibly have 14 wheelchairs in here or maybe up to 10 depending on their educational needs in a class and I would hate to see the size of classrooms go down, i.e. the floor space.

Response:

GG: Whether the current classrooms we have are fit for purpose size-wise is what the design will address as the staff feed back into the consultation.

Question:

I find this whole process quite difficult as we did not ask to move and I don't know if you feel the hostility sometimes but we are not happy about it. You are taking this site away but if you could knock this bit down and build the school that we would like the atmosphere at these meetings would be very different. It is quite difficult as we are sitting here choosing on two sites which no-one actually wants although I may be speaking out of turn but that is how I feel. Looking at the Weedingshall site there is money available for the 30 square metre per pupil. Does that include flattening the areas for playing fields because at the moment we use Larbert HS fields which is a huge area of flat ground. We don't expect that, but would there be money available for flattening Weedingshall and

making things useable. Secondly, if we asked for an astroturf pitch about a quarter of the size of a normal pitch, would there be space?

Answer:

GG: We would have to take your request on board and if at the design stage you wanted a playing field or an all-weather MUGA then we would build this into the design considerations.

Question:

I was not available for the previous meeting and wanted to ask about shared facilities. I wonder whether your planning/funding type team have this vision of shared facilities because from my point of view I would prefer not to share facilities so that would lean me towards the Weedingshall site because I don't think sharing facilities at a primary school, even if it is a garden or a play area. Personally from an educational view, I don't think that works. If you are saying you don't want shared facilities and there won't be shared facilities, then I would perhaps lean towards the Moray Primary site.

Answer:

GG: The question of shared facilities is interesting because it is the Government's agenda to build integrated shared community facilities if we can into schools. However if you say that you do not want to do that then the design team will consider this.

Statement:

It would save the Council a lot of money if we could for example share a games hall and we might get a bigger games hall from sharing. It is whether the Council has a view that it would help Moray Primary and Carrongrange to get a new school so that they would benefit from our build. Whether there is a view of that within the Council that Moray Primary are going to benefit from us being there.

Response:

GG: We have no preconceived ideas on this. Those ideas will come to fruition once we are at the next stage and we will welcome your input as and when we start.

Statement:

As former Chair of Carrongrange Parents Council, when I was first contacted by the Director of Education, Andrew Sutherland about the proposed bid I was delighted personally and I rang round the Parents Council to ascertain their view. This was in the school holidays as to whether they thought a new school would be reacted favourably to or not. Unanimously the reaction of the parents I spoke to, not the parent body but the members of the Parents Council was yes, let's go for it. The reason for that is because we have a wonderful school and facilities here and my child has benefited from those wonderful facilities alongside tremendous staff. What really inspired me was the statement of a "State of the Art" school because these children deserve it. They are wonderful children who come here that have got unlimited potential which you can't really see when they first come here. We thought if you could take what is already a very good school and make it State of the Art then that would be something that not only future parents and pupils could benefit from but Falkirk could be proud of. It will be a gem within Scottish Education and that I am pleased to see is reflected in the Consultation document – the word State of the Art. I am still excited about that potential but not if it turns into a bog standard school. I appreciate the difficulties about not talking about designs until people do that and I think it is a really important point to make and to tell to other parents that that is part and parcel of this project.

Response:

GG: I agree wholeheartedly with that and we on the design team are excited as well. The school at St Bernadette's has won awards, Kinnauld won awards and Maddiston was praised as well so everything we do is to provide schools built to a very high standard and that is a compliment to all Elected Members who have been involved in this and getting the best for Falkirk parents. We are also looking to work with one of the Councils in the west of Scotland to share commonality as they are also designing a special school, slightly smaller which will cover age years zero to 18. We will share good practice and

hopefully learn from the past. State of the art is not always just the building but it is how you use it inside.

Question:

The consultation ends on October 11th and the report is then produced in the middle of November towards the end. What criteria are you going to use to make your recommendation to Education Executive? If it is just to be based on the responses you get through the consultation why will it take two months to come to a decision?

Answer:

GG: We have to take on board the views of those consulted. We look at the views to see if there is one site which is favoured – obviously 95% for one site and 5% for the other would show a strong preference. We are quite open about that and members have all said let see the results of the consultation. Education Scotland also has to produce their report which is an independent assessment of how we carried out the consultation. They will talk separately to Head Teachers and Parent Councils to make sure that the views are accurately reflected and they need time to do that. The other bit of the time delay is that we have to feed into the next Education Executive meeting and that is not scheduled until 4th February 2014 which is a set date. If, however there is perhaps a need to do it earlier we will look at that to see if we need to call a special meeting to consider the decision earlier.

Statement:

Referring to the gap, if you have a consultation document which comes into the public domain and it is a 95% / 5% split for one site or the other, you then have a big long gap until February where you go public with the decision, it does lay you open to cynical views that other things are going on behind the scenes.

Response:

GG: It is an important point.

AN: Once we have the information back from Education Scotland, I have no problem in following up with an extra meeting. I am conscious that there is a gap but it is important to allow Education Scotland to feed into the process.

Question:

Is it right to say that the land at Moray PS has outline planning permission for housing?

Answer:

RT: I am not aware of it having outline planning but it has been allocated for housing.

Statement:

I believe it was in the development plan.

Response:

GG: That point came up quite clearly at the Moray meeting.

Question:

Does that not show that the Council has the input to push towards because they know it could have a school there?

Answer:

GG: If it is only outline there is no detailed planning permission as a potential site for affordable housing. From a Council point of view they are already building a lot of affordable housing on old school sites which we had.

RT: With consultation reports, we tend to break it down to a more granular level where we say who has responded and as there are 3 schools involved, this is the response from them. If the Parent council at Moray Primary School say they want the school here this will it is clear that Moray PS Parent Council perhaps affected by the news of other consultations, it should be clear if there is a campaign to build the school at Moray so that they don't get housing but I can't see that being a big influence. We have given the consultation document to families affected by the move as well as staff. We have consulted with the wider community but targeted at community representatives although

the consultation is open to everyone. We will deal with the local community issues at planning stage.

NF: One of the reasons the consultation works the way it does and why you don't just take a head count and go with the majority vote is because Elected Members have to take into account where those different expressions of interest came from and that is why it is their decision. They are the local Elected Members, voted in by the communities and collectively they make a decision. It is not Education Services that makes the decision.

Question:

My son is in Primary 6 now and we got the letter. Did the letter go out to pupils already in Primary 1 in enhanced provision or did you select an age range?

Answer:

RT: We have to try and consult with everyone who is likely to be affected by the move. The new school won't open until 2016 so that already affects quite a lot of primary pupils. We sent the consultation letter out to all pupils of enhanced provision. Clearly there are other pupils who may eventually come to Carrongrange, but it is difficult to identify these pupils.

Statement:

Myself and other parents are thinking, why are we moving? And if that is because of a capacity issue at Larbert HS. If it is, it makes you feel as if your children are not quite as important as other kids at Larbert HS and in mainstream and is the whole move because of the rezoning attempt they had a few years ago to relocate secondary pupils who are more than able to go to places like Grangemouth HS which has plenty of capacity and other secondary schools. You also see primary schools like St Bernadette's getting put into good sites where we feel we are getting offered sites that are not in as much as a prime location as these other children when there is capacity at schools like Larbert Village, Ladeside and Stenhousemuir primary and it does make you feel as a parent of a special needs child that you are not getting the best package here. Why do these things happen because as clearly said, we are quite happy here? I understand that there are things we could do to make it better like tracking systems and things like that but I feel this is a good site with good links and we are genuinely happy. We have the space and the equipment need as well.

Response:

GG: The point made earlier about the aspirations of having a state of the art school for pupils and we will try our best to make this happen.

Statement:

Larbert HS is such a big school and one of the largest in Scotland but what I am struggling with is that although they will have access to Grangemouth HS or any high school, and possibly integrating some of those children into high school. Denny High and Grangemouth High schools can do it and personally I don't know what their needs have to be for that but shortly we will have to look at places and decide which route we want to put our son through. Should we not also consider that maybe some of the children could go into Larbert HS with the right facilities as other high schools have done it.

Response:

NF: We have policies in Falkirk to try and have a range of facilities to meet the needs of our young people. In some cases it makes more sense for them to be in a school like Carrongrange School and others to be integrated. We try and chose what best meets their needs and that would be a decision for you.

Question:

Does Larbert HS not have that provision because Carrongrange is right on the doorstep?

Answer:

NF: No, there are enhanced provisions in all our secondary schools and there are significant attempts made to make sure that they are included in all our mainstream schools. This is an additional facility which is different and is for those who are, partly through the work of professionals but also in collaboration and discussion with parents as

to what best meets their particular needs. You have a difficult decision which is a hard one to take. Carrongrange is not here because there are no children in Larbert High School because there are.

Statement:

But the units are different from an enhanced provision. Northfield unit at Denny and Grangemouth High School are very different from enhanced provision at Larbert High School.

Statement:

We have not been down that path yet as he is just in primary 6 but will be facing that next year.

Response:

NF: You have quite a bit of research to do ahead of you on the different types of facility which we have. We have provision in 2 of our secondary schools, we have provision in both Denny and Grangemouth High Schools for a particular type of young person and often with particular language difficulties. I would suggest that you talk carefully to your head teacher and then talk to your ASL adviser as to what is the best provision for your child.

Statement:

There is also a spin off with the capacity next door as I have children next door as well (LHS) and kids can't get fed at lunchtime as there are so many of them. The shopping centre is choc-a-block as there are so many pupils. There are local issues with residents not being able to get in and out of drives because parents come at the end and beginning of the school day and surely vacating these premises and increasing your capacity at Larbert HS it will cause issues as well.

Response:

NF: I have to point out to you that the decision has been taken. The council has decided to build a new provision and the consultation is about which of those two identified sites best meets the needs of the parents and the staff of Carrongrange.

Statement:

I raised the point last week and you knocked it back but I would like to have it corrected on the Minutes if that is ok. The land at Falkirk High School is still owned by Falkirk Council with no likely buyer at the moment so it is still unassigned. It might be in future used to build Council houses on it. Can this be minuted as I was told it was sold last week.

Response:

GG: The Council's asset management group passed us the sites that were available so we were limited (*to this selection*).

NF: We will make sure the Minute is accurate.

Question:

There are two things I am concerned about at Moray Primary. Both are great sites and I agree that if we can get a state of the art facility it will be absolutely fabulous as there are things that are lacking in this school that would be fantastic for our kids. I am not happy about the lack of integration that the kids will be able to go back and forward independently and I will never be happy with that. If the Council could put on extra transport and staff to get our kids from the school to for instance Grangemouth HS, as long as that was a long term commitment and didn't detract from the education of the other kids then I could become happy with that. That is a money issue as well. If the land at the Moray PS is within the SEPA coastal flooding zone which is in your own consultation document and because I lived in Grangemouth for a number of years there is talk that the drainage on the Moray PS site is poor, if a problem was found with any of the sites chosen, i.e. no Government permission granted because it is within the buffer zone or the drainage is found to be too problematic to put in a swimming pool or things that we need would the decision automatically default to the other site, and the same at Weedingshall? Would it come back to public consultation?



Answer:

GG: I am hoping that this does not happen but we have dealt with unfortunate situations in the past such as schools burning down. There are always issues that arise on site, some of which are minor but we would hope to be able to overcome them on site. We would have to go back to Elected Members to see what their views were and how to resolve. We could not make that decision ourselves.

Question:

Could the Government knock back the Moray site because it is central in the blast zone and would be accommodating special needs children?

Answer:

GG: The planners do not see it as a problem bearing in mind we built a new high school and there have been developments around the Moray Primary School. They are fairly confident that we will be able to overcome any hurdle.

Question:

Last week there was discussion about the pollution from the distillery. When will the answers be available?

Answer:

GG: We will write to you when we get the answers as the information is not yet available.

Statement:

I am not a parent or staff but in relation to Weedingshall, is it currently occupied?

Response:

GG: It is occupied and there are pupils in the school at the moment. There are 29 pupils on site. There is an older building which is used and a modular unit which will be removed from the site. They are part of the assessment unit in Camelon and have been brought together on site but they will not be there long term as we are looking for another site.

Nigel Fletcher thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8:10 pm.

**Note of
meeting with
Carrongrange
School staff on
5th September
2013**

Minute of meeting held at Carrongrange School on Thursday 5th September 2013.

Members in attendance:

Nigel Fletcher (NF)	-	Acting Director of Education – Educational Support & Improvement
Gary Greenhorn (GG)	-	Acting Director of Education – Educational Planning & Resource
Alan Livingstone (AL)	-	Property Development Manager
Richard Teed (RF)	-	Senior Forward Planning Officer
Jennifer Anderson (JA)	-	Forward Planning Officer (minute taker)

Gillian Robertson, Head Teacher, Carrongrange School, and 19 members of staff.

Gillian Robertson introduced representatives of Education Services and Nigel Fletcher welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that Gary Greenhorn would attend the meeting shortly.

Richard Teed gave a brief introduction relating to the site selection process and the role of the site selection team. A “questions and answers” session followed.

Question:

Have you taken account that many will not necessarily be the current pupils at the school at that point of time and what the likely catchment area of pupils will be when the school is built?

Answer:

RT: We are working on the basis that there will be roughly the same amount of pupils from each area coming to the school over the course of time. We will be building a school which will stand for at least 50 years so we feel the current cohort will provide a good proxy for the number and distribution of pupils.

NF: You are correct in that it does vary from year to year.

Question:

Does the Weedingshall site share the same driveway as the new cemetery?

Answer:

AL: The current driveway is the same.

Question:

Would there be any plans for children to go in a different way. Funerals go on all day. Our kids would be out and about and obviously you would not want some of our kids who are terminally ill to be exposed to this. There is quite a lot of sensitivity and parents come to the school as well.

Answer:

NF: That is an important issue to feed back.

AL: If Weedingshall was the preferred site we would look at the access arrangements.

NF: What will happen is that the decision will be made on which site and then we will come back about the design and the design won't be just the building. It will be the approaches as well, but it is a really important point.

Question:

Is there one site likely to be more expensive to build on than the other? From the point of sharing facilities with Moray or Moray uses some of the facilities that are developed for the new school.

Answer:

NF: At the recent Education Executive meeting, Members mentioned the importance of schools having good links with local communities. That was the original idea behind building Carrongrange here, next to Larbert HS. It is not about saving money by sharing the facility but by liaison and linking rather than giving one set of facilities that both schools can use. That is not part of the thinking which is why they are being seen as two separate building projects with some advantages and some disadvantages to each one.

Question:

There is a finite amount of money and because of the different sites could you have 1 and a half times the school on one location than on the other?

Answer:

AL: I think the Weedingshall site will be a more challenging site to develop a new building on because of the topography. Moray PS site is level so as with any level site it is easier to build on.

Statement:

If there was a site that could definitely get a programme within budget rather than the other site which would be more difficult.

Question:

We were told we would not get any less than we have here. We have a pool and a hydro therapy pool so we won't get less?

Answer:

NF: Gary Greenhorn is expected to arrive shortly. Can we leave this to pick up again when he comes in as it is an important point?

Statement:

You talked about selecting the Moray Primary site, you (*the Council*) tried to build residential buildings on the site the people round about put in a protest because the school itself wanted to keep the green land and the residents were unhappy about more houses going into that site. It really concerns me that if you go down there when the schools are coming out, the cars coming along the road, parking, a nursery site, a behavioural unit, and Moray PS which is a huge school for pupils, there are loads of buses going in and out as well as taxis. At the moment the roads are chaotic and even if changing the exit you would be going on to a bend, on to a main road with shops etc. and with pupils going in and out I am concerned over safety. The road is a busy narrow road with flats along the road and difficult for buses to turn.

Response:

NF: Again this is an important issue to flag up. We have transport and roads teams who are the experts in this who will do the analysis, which will include buses.

RT: On a site visit with a number of staff from Development Services and Planning and discussed the whole access issue and that we would have to consider building some alternative access point, probably from the Oxbang Road side.

NF: If Moray ends up being the chosen site it would be important to look at road access. In addition to the design of the building.

AL: It is part of the whole planning process that there will be a proper traffic management survey carried out.

Question:

Should that not have been done before the site was proposed and before you narrowed your decision to two sites? If a proper traffic analysis is carried now and it shows that the site is unsuitable is that not a waste of time?

Answer:

RT: The view of the planners was that there were not any deal breakers with either site and we can find ways of managing the traffic at that site. St Bernadette's was built on a similar road, a bus route and a busy road and we were obliged to put in a roundabout and various traffic management measures. We will follow the guidance of the experts in this.

NF: If you think of all the new schools built over the last 5 years, Falkirk & Denny High Schools, all of them have changed their access arrangements to manage the traffic. Falkirk HS is even bigger numbers and goes straight on to the road there.

Statement:

I would like to say that the traffic management at the new building is appalling (*referring to Falkirk High*). It does not work. It is dangerous, with no railings to stop children getting on to the road. It has been adjusted now but it was bad at the time.

Statement:

I am concerned about the loss of access and identity within the community to pupils. I am wondering how they can identify in the community at a school if they are in a quiet location.

Response:

NF: This is why it is important to have the consultation as we need to weigh up the positive and negative factors associated with both sites. At the Education Executive, they were particularly interested in making sure there is a strong link with the community.

Statement:

I agree with the point about the community but what really concerns me is that at the moment we are quite fortunate to be next to Larbert HS and a few of our pupils are now accessing Larbert HS and doing courses there. This is absolutely marvellous to know that we have some inclusion. I don't think there is enough of our pupils accessing it at the moment but we are getting there. Being in close proximity to a high school and not a primary school is important. Some of our kids look to Larbert HS as their role models and we, like the high school are doing things like Glee club and access after school activities. They have left the primary school behind, developing and becoming more adult so although it is a site and a school but it is not the kind of school we should be sited next to. It should be more either a high school or where they will be travelling to which is a college as well as being near a town where they can go out into the community and actually be faces in a community.

Response:

NF: I accept this point but you haven't free choice as to where you can build a new school. You are limited in that. I do think it is important that whichever site, there are links created with the secondary schools and again that may be easier in Grangemouth than it would be in Polmont where the nearest school would be Graeme High School which is about 2 miles away.

RT: Graeme, Braes and Grangemouth High Schools are all fairly equidistant from the Weedingshall site, but they are not within walking distance.

NF: The kind of links that have been created with Larbert HS we do not want to lose. We are going to have to look at solutions because we only have the two sites to consider.

Statement:

The whole point is that the sites are not suitable. If they are not within walking distance we would need to put in more mini buses.

Question:

Will you be looking at the site next to Graeme High School again? Originally the large site was absolutely ideal but the Antonine Wall was in the way and they couldn't knock a bit of it down.

Answer:

NF: The decision was only recently taken on the 27th August by Education Executive so we must respect and act on that.

RT: We did look at a site next to Callendar Business Park but it was almost dismissed straight away in our discussion with the planners. It wasn't just Antonine Wall but the topography of the site. I don't know whether that is the one you are meaning but there were so many environmental designations that we would never have got anything through planning if we had chosen the site. We did look at another site next to the fire station but we could not have afforded to develop that site because of the flooding issues there. It will only be developed as part of a much larger economic development.

Statement:

I am surprised to hear that. I was brought up in one of the houses in the picture used to illustrate that site for more than 28 years and had never seen that field flooded until recently.

Response

RT: It is a very expensive operation which is why it is part of the big economic regeneration bid which was all in progress when we looked at the site. We realised it was not available or affordable. So those are the sites within the proximity of Graeme HS which we have looked at and neither of them are available or possible to develop.

Question:

Regarding the Weedingshall site and planning issues. Are there historical issues surrounding that site and demolishing buildings if it is an old country estate. I am not from the area so I don't know the site well?

Answer:

NF: It is not a listed building and the planners have assured us of this. The land around it is green belt so everything done would have to be sensitively approached. It is worth noting however that the site is already a school and the building behind it has been demolished.

Statement:

The thing about Weedingshall is that it has bad connotations as it was a children's home.

Question:

Can I clarify that the two sites are the only two sites that are being looked at so if parents during the consultation process, do not like those sites at all, that will be it? There is nothing else to be looked at as it is purely between these two sites.

Answer:

RT: We are looking for a preference through this consultation of two sites. We have exhausted all the possibilities in the Falkirk Council area and do not have a budget to buy a site on prime development land.

Question:

What is the Scottish Government giving us?

Answer:

RT: They will fund 50% of the cost so the Council has agreed to pay the remaining 50% of the costs.

Question:

So basically the Council does not have to pay any money at all for the land at the Moray and the Weedingshall sites?

Answer:

NF: It is Council owned.

Question:

Was the old Denny High School site available?

Answer:

RT: It was looked at but it was dismissed on the basis that it was too remote for too many of the pupils who attend Carrongrange School. If more central it would have been more favourable.

Question:

Is Weedingshall not too remote?

Answer:

RT: Weedingshall is actually very central and more central than Carrongrange is at the moment for the pupils who attend the school, so in terms of travel time for the pupils it is central and Moray school is not that far away either.

Statement:

I feel we are going from the heart of a community and a lot of people feel strongly about that as they have become part of the community and both sites feel to be on the outskirts. You are either out in the country or next to a primary school. There is already a stigma attached to attending a special school but now you are either out there as we don't want to see you or you are never going to get very far if next to a primary school.

Statement:

The mind set for a lot of our children will naturally gravitate to a primary school level behaviour.

Response:

NF: That is why we must develop links with local High Schools.

Statement:

Neither of those sites are anywhere near a high school and not accessible for our seniors. It was a positive step when we moved here although there was nervousness about us being next door to Larbert HS.

Nigel introduced Gary Greenhorn on joining the meeting.

Question:

Why is the resource not being put into providing additional accommodation at Larbert High? To build a new special school it requires kitchens, it requires management offices, new halls. Could the school not have been extended?

Answer:

GG: It is more cost effective to build a new special school than extend Larbert HS. A number of reasons for this. Firstly, the Government is giving us half the cost but would not have given us half the cost for an extension and secondly because of the rules concerning the refinancing of PPP projects. In terms of best value it is often preferable to build a new school.

Question:

Does that mean that Falkirk Council owns our school again rather than MITIE?

Question:

Will Falkirk Council own the new school?

Answer:

GG: Falkirk Council will own the new school.

Statement:

We were told by Andrew Sutherland (former Director of Education) at his initial visit that we would get no less than we have just now and I would like to reiterate that point.

Response:

GG: It depends on how you define no less. You will have the facilities that will allow you to deliver what you currently do, however, what shape they take is another matter. The school you have is too big for the current pupil population and indeed the future pupil population.

Question:

Is the school we have too big because of the number of pupils we have when you are looking at the square metres per pupil?

Answer:

GG: We look at it in several ways. The school was designed initially for approximately 250 pupils and has recently operated around the 150/160 mark. The roll may rise to around 175 but we do not expect it will go beyond that. In Central Region days Carrongrange was heralded as a great school and before reorganisation (1996) Clackmannan and Stirling undertook to send some of their pupils here. Following reorganisation however when the 3 Councils were broken up Falkirk had to charge other

Councils who used the school so they both took their own pupils back. That is why initially it was expected that the numbers at Carrongrange would be higher. Central Region broke up in 1996. Other authorities could send their pupils here, but they would have to pay for this. Some authorities will not pursue this due either to best value or because of budget pressures.

Question:

Will we have the facilities in the new building that we currently have here?

Answer:

GG: Yes

Question:

If we have a school on the Moray site will we perhaps have to share or use Moray Primary facilities?

Answer:

GG: In the main, we will look to provide the facilities you need for the pupils you have. The problem is that until we pick the site we cannot do the design and the design part cannot start until the consultation is complete. The design team will consider how best to approach this and you can feed into this.

Statement:

Are either of these sites restrictive to allow us to have as many facilities and is there any reason why we couldn't have a pool at Moray or Weedingshall?

Response:

GG: Both sites can accommodate the school given the size we expect the school to be. The question of restrictions is dependent on the site contours and levels etc. We are working with another Council in Scotland who is building another similar type of school that we can learn from each other's experience and share good ideas. Their staff will be feeding into that process along with our staff with the key aim of delivering a school which is fit for purpose and is within the money we have.

Question:

Will the new school match what we have here and will they be on site. That is what concerns the staff?

Answer:

GG: The facilities which you will have will be no less than what you have got. I did not say they will all be on site but in the main we will try to do that.

A discussion followed on the provision of swimming pools.

Statement:

There is a chance we won't get like for like and that something will have to be given up at the expense of something else.

Statement:

You have 2 sites and to make the most of the school with the budget we have for these sites, it should meet what we have here at Carrongrange.

Response:

GG: It will. We don't know the specification and the ultimate cost as yet. It is all a question of priorities and the cost of them. Aspirationally, people will always want more but what we can deliver is always short of that. We must make sure that what we are delivering is in common with what other Councils are delivering which is where the SFT (*Scottish Futures Trust*) will come in, to ensure compatibility of provision.

Statement:

I assume that your budgeting will take into consideration running costs and we are not paying hefty charges.

Response:

GG: This does not come into the budget as it is a capital budget for building the new school. Those other issues come into the consequence of revenue budget after building a new school. We are here to focus on the site.

Statement:

To add on to that point how would you then square it with the parents of the pupils who are going to come to this school who then look at every other school in Falkirk Council have a swimming pool, have x, y & z facilities on site. Not only is your child going to come to a special school which is a big thing for parents but they are going to have to go by bus to a swimming pool. If your child went to another high school that has a better design. There a bit of discrimination there as well.

Response:

GG: One of the options considered some years ago was to decentralise the Carrongrange provision across all 8 high schools but we did not want that. If your main priority is a pool then feed it into your response.

Statement:

Kids with very severe learning difficulties who can be in excruciating pain and put them in a swimming pool can make a huge difference to them so it is not the same.

Response:

GG: This is why you are critical to the process because we don't know this and we listen to you so when you feed into the design team. This is exactly the feedback we want. If the staff state what is their number one priority and the parents echo that we will have to consider that.

Question:

Is there any way in this consultation process where we can be party to some of the numbers as from my point of view that affects my decision on the site? I am assuming that the Moray PS will be cheaper to build on than the Weedingshall site and were I able to build more cheaply on one plot, then I would base it on that. To help my decision which is the best site to go for, part of my decision is knowing what I am going to get on that site. If you want to build this school identical to this school and Weedingshall will cost this and Moray will cost this and from that we know we can save a bit here!

Answer:

GG: There are no figures to give you because until you actually design it no-one is going to tell you how much it is going to cost. Both sites can accommodate a new Carrongrange school and the cost will depend on what you want to build into that site in terms of the design. The Scottish Futures Trust have building indices that show what you can build a school for, and that is what the grant is based on. Within a square metre-age it is your decision on how you configure the school. There have been no other costings done other than to consider the size of the building.

Statement:

At that time it is too late as we have gone past that. At that stage I might choose Weedingshall instead of Moray. Surely you can ball park?

Response:

AL: We can't start the design until we have a site.

GG: We built St Bernadette's at over £8 million. I can give you the plans for that if that helps in any way? Carrongrange is unique in Scotland in as much as no-one has built a Carrongrange in Scotland recently so the costs are unknown. We are looking at costs that have come through for primary schools. One or two authorities have built special units attached to mainstream schools, one in Alloa, and one or two small smallish special schools in other authorities. Some are planning on building 0-18 special schools but on a smaller base so we are all at the same point. We can feed these issues in mainly through the design process. You have to accept that both sites will meet your requirements.

NF: Can we make this the last question as I am conscious of the time?

Statement:

At some stage in the proceedings a decision must have been made as to what the preferred site was and as a result we must have had a detailed design plan for the school on that site.

Response:

GG: The site will determine how you design the school. If you need 30 classrooms and that will be included. We are saying that the actual configuration will fit in both sites and whilst there may be different dynamics in terms of how you lay it out depending on the contour of the site. We can't spend that much time looking at all of that until we make the decision on the site.

Question:

What about building work that involves transport access, these sorts of things?

Answer:

GG: The figure includes everything.

Question:

You are talking about the topography of the site at Weedingshall. Surely you must have some context of a design and an architect to say whether that is going to make it more expensive to develop that site than the flat site at Moray PS.

Answer:

RT: The actual part available for development and building is fairly level at Weedingshall so it is close to Moray PS but the surrounding ground for car parking and playground there are lots of design options for that. The access and road works at Moray PS would take some of the budget which we perhaps wouldn't have to pay at Weedingshall. We don't know at this stage as you have to pay consultants thousands of pounds to get these answers and we are not at that stage in the process.

GG: There will be access requirements at both schools. There will be common access requirements, on site requirements, but the basic service provisions for both sites are there. The land is fairly level at both sites although there will have to be improvements at both sites. If asked to give a design to cost, we can't as there is no design.

NF: As we stated, we are at the start of the consultation and is not the end of it. There are opportunities not only about choosing the location but later on particularly on the design part which you will be most interested in.

RT: Can I ask you to complete the pro forma attached to the consultation document. Whilst we reflect what has been discussed here in the consultation report it might not reflect exactly what each of you is thinking and want to contribute to the consultation. Please send your responses in and they will all be reflected in the consultation report at the end.

GG: Please state your choice which can be collective or an individual opinion and will be reflected in the report for Members to consider. It is not our decision but the Members who make the decision.

Nigel thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

APPENDIX C: REPORT BY EDUCATION SCOTLAND

Consultation proposal by Falkirk Council

Report by HM Inspectors, Education Scotland, addressing educational aspects of the proposal to relocate Carrongrange School to one of two locations.

Context

This report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act. The purpose of this report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of the council's consultation proposal. Section 2 of this report sets out the views expressed by consultees during the initial consultation process. Section 3 sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal and the views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Falkirk Council proposes to relocate Carrongrange School to one of two locations:
- Land alongside Moray Primary School in Grangemouth, or
 - Weedingshall in Polmont.
- 1.2 The report from HM Inspectors is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act.
- 1.3 HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspects of the proposal:
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
 - visits to the site of Carrongrange School, Moray Primary School and Weedingshall House, including discussion with relevant consultees.
- 1.4 HM Inspectors considered:
- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the school;
 - any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date
 - of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in
 - the council area
 - any other likely effects of the proposal;

- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may
- arise from the proposal; and
- benefits which the council believes will result from implementation of the
- proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

2 Consultation process

- 2.1 Falkirk Council undertook the initial consultation on its proposals with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.
- 2.2 Parents of young people attending Carrongrange School express no significant majority view for one site. A minority do not support relocation to either site. For almost all parents, the understandable lack of any kind of image or representation of what the new building may look like in either setting has made forming a view problematic. The Parent Council at Carrongrange was fully involved with site selection but not all consultees feel fully aware of the sites assessed and the reasoning behind selection and rejection of these sites. Parents of young people in other settings who may attend Carrongrange School in the future are similarly split and express similar views overall. Almost all parents would value more information on the site selection process and relevant discussions arising.
- 2.3 Parents who support the Moray Primary School site feel it offers better community and educational links. Supporters also value the large level site that they believe allows easier movement for the young people with physical difficulties and visual impairments. Those in favour believe that there are easier transport links for parents to visit the school for events and meetings. Those parents who oppose the Moray site believe that relocating Carrongrange School next to a primary school removes the current proximity to appropriately aged role models for their young people. In addition concerns were also expressed over the site location being within the refinery consultation ('blast') zone and about potential anti-social behaviour.
- 2.4 Parents in favour of Weedingshall are positive about the rural setting which they believe would offer many opportunities for outdoor learning and ample room to expand the Carrongrange School facilities over time. Those who do not support the move to Weedingshall feel it is too remote. Furthermore, some feel that their young people are being placed outwith any community to contribute to. Opponents also feel that young people would not be able to access amenities and educational resources given the longer travel time involved compared to their current site and the Moray Primary School site. Opponents also feel the terrain is problematic in that it is contoured and will cause difficulties for young people with physical difficulties and visual impairments in moving around beyond the footprint of the proposed new building. There is also a concern about the proximity of a cemetery which may cause distress as some of young people are terminally ill.
- 2.5 The young people at Carrongrange School marginally prefer the Moray Primary site. The student council visited both sites and prepared a presentation which was shared with the whole school. They believe it is closer to amenities and educational resources than Weedingshall. They also feel the site's level terrain will provide easier movement around the site for those with physical difficulties and visual impairments. This contrasts with Weedingshall which they feel is more contoured and harder to move around beyond the proposed site of the new building. The young people do feel there will be more travelling required at the Moray Primary School site to access local amenities and Grangemouth High School than at their current location. They are not yet certain how this will be supported so as not to encroach too much on their learning time. However, they feel it

would involve less time than similar activities from the Weedingshall site. The young people believe that both sites present challenges when they move about, around the wider community for safe and easy movement. They have concerns over the pavements in terms of heights and widths and of safe places to cross. Falkirk Council needs to provide the young people with the information and reassurance they require that they will be able to move beyond either site with safety and independence.

- 2.6 Pupils at Moray Primary School have few objections to the relocation of Carrongrange on their playing fields. The concerns they have are about the proposed new school not taking over too much of their playing fields and the impact of additional traffic congestion at crucial times of the day. They are enthusiastic about the possibility of sharing some of the new school's facilities and resources.
- 2.7 Staff at Carrongrange School show a similar split in views and preferences to those of their parent community. They feel, however, that unlike parents, they have been given limited opportunity to participate fully in the process to date. Many are not yet convinced of the case for relocation.
- 2.8 Staff at Moray Primary School are positive about relocating Carrongrange School to their playing fields and see opportunities for strong educational links and sharing of resources and facilities. They share their pupils' concerns over the new building taking over too much space and the possibility of increased traffic congestion should no new entrance be incorporated into the plans following site agreement.

3 Educational aspects of the proposal

- 3.1 The educational benefits statement for the rebuilding of Carrongrange School proposes that it will deliver a better learning environment for the young people who will attend the new school. In designing the new building, whichever site is agreed, the impact of current legislation regarding equality of access and opportunity will assure this. However, the proposal relates to the site and not to the design and layout of a new school. This aspect will only be attended to once a site has been agreed.
- 3.2 A number of stakeholders, especially staff in Carrongrange School, feel that they have not been fully involved in the site selection proposal or understand the rationale for arriving at the final list of two proposed sites. Stakeholders holding such views, feel concerned that their limited involvement does not provide them with confidence that they will be as fully involved in the design and build stages as they would want to be once the site is agreed. The council needs to provide staff with reassurance that they will have a significant role in the later stages beyond site agreement.
- 3.3 Young people continuing at Carrongrange School when it relocates to its new building and those who will join after that date will benefit from the commitment to provide teaching areas on ground floor level only. Many current young people have physical difficulties and/or visual impairments and accessing teaching areas on upper levels can be problematic.
- 3.4 The projected intake over the coming years is expected to significantly alter the profile of the school population. A greater proportion of young people with physical difficulties and/or visual impairment will attend the school. This was not the school population that the current building was designed to accommodate. The commitment to ground floor teaching areas will be of significant educational benefit in terms of ease of access to

future learners.

- 3.5 The proposal to make the latest technological innovations in learning for young people with additional and complex learning difficulties integral to the design will also benefit the young people who attend the new school. They will be able to move around the building more independently and access their learning more fully. Taking account of best practice within the Falkirk area and beyond will also benefit through the design of a building that can more fully support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence.
- 3.6 The current location of Carrongrange School allows access to a range of local amenities that are integral to the development of life skills such as independence. The current location also allows for easy linkage with Larbert High School. Falkirk Council has not yet given enough information on how such community and educational links will be developed for either site within the proposal. Each site has opportunities for such links to be developed although neither is as close or accessible as the current location. Given the central importance of developing life skills for the young people who will attend the new school, the council needs to provide more information about how it will support the school and staff in developing and maintaining links outwith the school site.
- 3.7 Senior students are encouraged to build their independence through going out into their community on their own or in small unsupervised groups. There are concerns about the ability for such movement around and beyond either of the proposed sites in terms of pavements, traffic and crossings as well as distances involved. Falkirk Council needs to provide more information on how it will support young people accessing and interacting independently and safely with whichever selected local area.

4 **Summary**

Falkirk Council has set out the case for relocating Carrongrange School and given concise and helpful information on the two preferred sites to allow consultees to inform them on the final site decision. They have explained the context and reasoning for their proposal well. They have made a strong case for the building and facilities that will be built on the chosen site. However, the proposal provides less detail on the proposed sites. The proposal is focused on site selection. Key information to inform such a decision has not yet been provided. Respondents have not given either site a significant majority of support. Falkirk Council need to provide information on how all key stakeholders will be involved in the design and build stages, whichever site is selected. The importance of developing young people's life skills in settings such as Carrongrange School is crucial and, in taking forward the proposal, Falkirk Council needs to provide more information on how it plans to support the development of links with whichever local community and high school is selected and provide reassurance to young people that they can move about their new local area safely and independently.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
November 2013**



APPENDIX D: CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT



PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE CARRONGRANGE SCHOOL

A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT

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1 PROPOSAL

Background

Carrongrange School opened in 2000 to replace Dawson Park School in a new purpose built facility. Dawson Park School was for children of all ages (primary and secondary) who had moderate learning difficulties and Carrongrange School was built to serve this purpose.

In 2002, Rossvail School in Camelon, which was a secondary school for children with severe and complex needs, was closed and amalgamated with Carrongrange School which underwent minor adaptations to meet the needs of these pupils.

The 2000 Standards in Schools Act introduced the “presumption of mainstream” for pupils with additional support needs which has resulted in the increasing provision of supported inclusion in mainstream primaries and secondary schools. This has, in turn, contributed to a reduced school roll and also led to a changing profile of pupils at Carrongrange School.

The outcome of these changes means that the school no longer caters for primary age children and today it is a secondary school for pupils with a very wide range of learning difficulties and physical needs. Although the school was built for around 250 pupils, there are now around 170 pupils at Carrongrange.

In 2012, the Scottish Government approved a bid for funding to rebuild Carrongrange School on a new site as part of their “Schools for the Future” programme. This means that Falkirk Council can deliver a new single-storey secondary school that will be purpose-built from the outset for the pupils that the school now serves. It is planned to open the new school in August 2016.

Funding to build a new school

One factor that has made this exciting project possible is the additional benefit that Larbert High School can now expand into the existing Carrongrange School building to meet the increasing pupil roll that it is facing over the next 5-10 years due to ongoing new housing development.

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that a formal consultation is carried out with all interested parties for any proposal to relocate a school. In preparation for this consultation, two potential locations for the new school have been identified as suitable for the new school. These sites are:

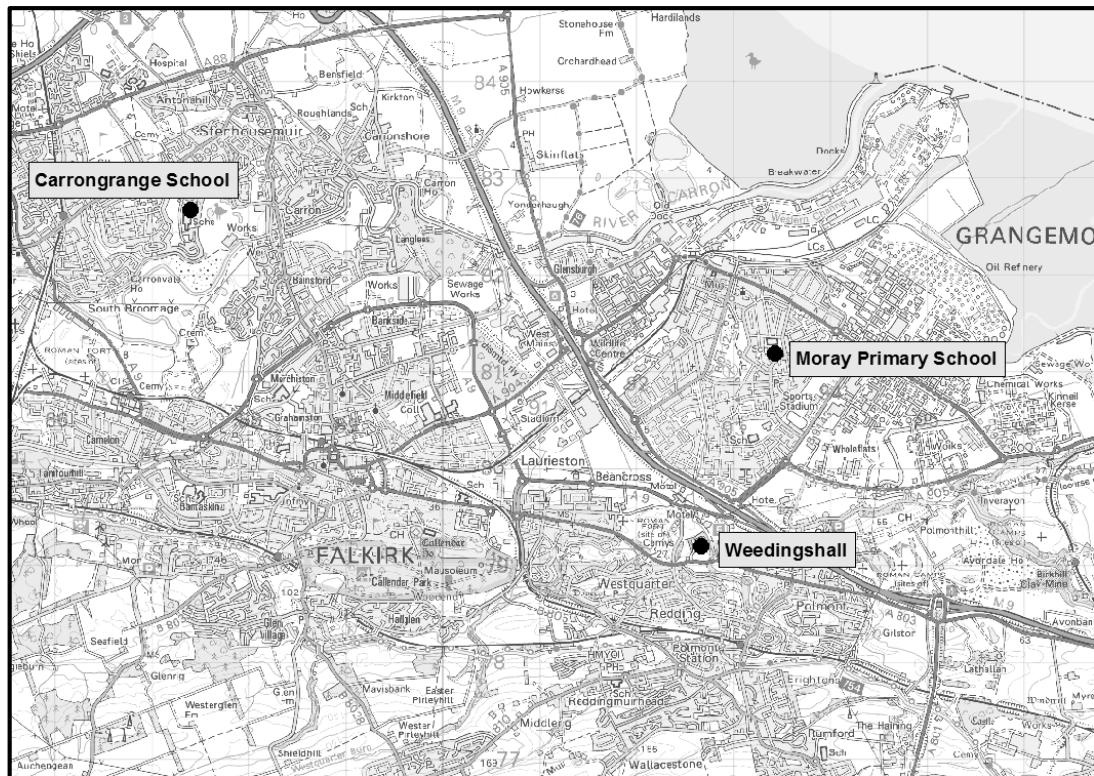
- Land alongside Moray Primary School in Grangemouth.
- Weedingshall in Polmont

Both sites are very different and have different strengths and Education Services do not currently have a preference. For this reason we are seeking the views of all interested parties during this consultation to determine which location should be chosen.

Consultative Document

Proposal	It is proposed that the Carrongrange School is relocated to one of two locations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land alongside Moray Primary School in Grangemouth. 2. Weedingshall in Polmont
Who would be affected?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils (and their families) who will be attending Carrongrange School from August 2016 onwards • School staff
Date of change	It is planned that the new school will open for school session 2016/2017.

Map of proposed locations



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2 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

New “State of the Art” School	Rebuilding Carrongrange to meet current design standards and reflect best practice in this area provides the opportunity to deliver a school that is better designed, configured and equipped to meet the needs of its current and future pupil cohort. The current school was not originally built for pupils with severe and complex needs, and the profile of pupils with moderate learning difficulties has changed significantly in the last 13 years.
Designed for “Curriculum for Excellence”	There will be an opportunity to design a new school with a rich, accessible and interactive learning environment that can deliver a Curriculum for Excellence for all pupils with additional support needs. The design of the new school will be based on the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence, with specialist subject teaching areas and appropriate adaptations from the outset. Visits to recently built special schools are already under way in order to identify best practice and incorporate tried and tested state of the art facilities. All interested parties (parents, pupils and staff) will have the opportunity to contribute during the design process.
More Accessible Teaching Areas	The new school will significantly improve access to teaching areas. Carrongrange School currently has teaching areas on both the ground floor and the first floor. Because of this, the first floor currently presents access challenges for pupils with physical difficulties and visual impairments and this has an impact on curricular delivery. There would be no such restrictions in the new school building which will have all teaching areas on the ground floor.
Embracing New Technology	The new school will have recent technological improvements and innovations included as an integral part of the design of the school to maximise the educational benefits which they can bring.
Outdoor Learning, Enterprise and Community Links	The current location of Carrongrange School allows access to a range of local amenities that are integral to the delivery of life/independence skills: e.g. supermarkets, cafes etc. This important aspect of the curriculum will be continued in the new school, and consideration given to accessing these amenities in the new location. Similarly, the development of Enterprise Education and outdoor learning, including cycling for all pupils (using specially adapted bicycles) will continue to be a high priority.
Wider Accessibility to Local Pupils with ASN	There is also the potential to reduce the number of pupils living in the Falkirk Council area that have to travel some distance to attend more specialist, out-of-authority schools.

3 LAND AT MORAY PRIMARY SCHOOL, GRANGEMOUTH

Aerial plan



Site description

There are 2.9 hectares of level ground alongside Moray Primary School. This area is currently grassed and is mostly surplus to the primary school's requirements. The new school will require around 2 hectares of this land and there would be the opportunity to share playing fields with Moray Primary School.

Area around this location

This location is in the heart of Grangemouth, close to Zetland Park (200 metres), Grangemouth High School (1km), Grangemouth Stadium (750m) and Grangemouth Town Centre (1km).

Particular strengths of this location

- Central location with easy access to Grangemouth town centre
- Adjacent and nearby to a number of educational, sports and recreational facilities
- Level site with easy access

Potential drawbacks with this location

The site falls within the Outer Consultation Zone with respect to nearby industry. This means that any plans for building a new school are very likely to be referred to the Scottish Government for final approval.

4 WEEDINGSHALL, POLMONT

Aerial plan



Note: The larger building has been demolished since this aerial photograph was taken

Site description

Weedingshall is currently used for the Educational Assessment Unit which teaches secondary age pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties. This unit is being merged with the Falkirk Day Unit in Camelon and Weedingshall is no longer required for this purpose. If chosen, the building itself would be demolished to provide the site for a new Carrongrange School building which would also use the level ground remaining from the demolition of the other larger building shown in the plan above.

There are over 4 hectares of grounds around Weedingshall with mature trees and parkland remaining from when the hall was the main house within a much larger country estate.

Area around this location

Weedingshall is set in the greenbelt between Laurieston and Polmont to the East of Falkirk. Graeme, Braes and Grangemouth High Schools are all within 2 miles and it is reasonably close to the Helix and all of the facilities in and around Falkirk Town Centre.

Particular strengths of this location

- Central location with easy access to Falkirk town centre and excellent nearby transport links
- Extensive and picturesque grounds that would enhance design and provide range of educational and recreational opportunities
- Quiet, peaceful setting

Potential drawbacks with this location

Although this is a very central location it is in an isolated position and does not have easy pedestrian access to nearby facilities when compared with the other site at Moray Primary School.

5 CONSULTATION

Legislation	<p>Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010</p> <p>A formal consultation is required for any proposal to relocate a school. This consultation fully accords with the requirements of this legislation.</p>
Consultees	<p>During the consultation period, in accordance with legislative requirements, views are being sought from a range of interested parties including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents of all Carrongrange School pupils • Parents of all pupils currently attending primary school additional support needs provision (Enhanced Provision (15 schools), Ladeside ASD Base, Kinnaird Primary School Thistle Wing, Maddiston Primary School Timezone, Windsor Park School) • The parent councils of Carrongrange School, Kinnaird Primary School, Maddiston Primary School, Moray Primary School and Windsor Park School • Pupils at Carrongrange School • School staff and trade unions • All community councils • All elected members • Education Scotland • Other local authorities with pupils currently attending Carrongrange School
Consultation period	<p>The consultation is taking place over a 6½ week period between 28th August and 11th October 2013</p>
Public meetings	<p>Two public meetings to discuss the proposal will be held as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moray Primary School on Tuesday 17th September 2013 at 7pm (Preceded by site visit opportunities – see below) • Carrongrange School on Tuesday 24th September 2013 at 7pm
Who can attend?	<p>Everyone is welcome to attend both meetings.</p>
Officers in attendance and format of the meeting	<p>Officers of the Council will be present to discuss the proposal and there will be an opportunity to ask questions at the meetings. We appreciate, however, that there may be limited time at the meetings to discuss everything fully and not everyone is comfortable with speaking in a public meeting.</p> <p>To make sure all issues are covered and everyone gets the opportunity to contribute to the discussion, we are happy to accept advance notice of specific questions or issues you would like to raise at these meetings. Advance questions will be accepted <u>in writing only</u> up to 2 days in advance of each meeting (see contact details below). Please let us know how the proposals would affect you and your family, and whether you would like to be named at the meeting as asking the particular question you submit.</p>

Consultative Document

Site visit opportunities	<p>Access to both sites for visits will be given on the evening of the public meeting at Moray Primary School on Tuesday 17th September 2013. Officers will be on site to answer any questions during the following times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weedingshall - 5pm to 6pm• Moray Primary School - 6pm to 7pm
How to respond	<p>Interested parties are encouraged to complete and return the pro-forma attached with this proposal document. Separate written submissions regarding this proposal will also be accepted by letter or e-mail until Friday 11th October 2013 when the consultation period ends.</p> <p>We will be happy to discuss the proposal on the phone, but telephone conversations will not be recorded as part of the consultation and all submissions should be in writing.</p>
Following the consultation	<p>Education Scotland will receive details of consultation responses and the public meeting and will provide Education Services with a report within 3 weeks of the consultation end date.</p> <p>Education Services will then prepare a <u>consultation report</u> which will be published mid-November on the council website and it will also be made available to read at libraries and at Education Services HQ (Sealock House in Grangemouth).</p> <p>The consultation report will be discussed by councillors at the appropriate Committee and will be used as the basis for determining the location for the new school.</p>
Contact details	<p>If you would like to discuss these proposals or have any queries regarding the consultation process, please phone us on 01324 506621 or 01324 506608.</p> <p>When completed, please return the attached pro-forma and any further written submission regarding these proposals to <i>Carrongrange Relocation Consultation, Education Services, Sealock House, 2 Inchyra Road, Grangemouth, FK3 9XB</i> or by email to educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk</p>



6 RESPONSE FORM

PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE CARRONGRANGE SCHOOL

Name:

Address:

.....

Contact Telephone Number:

Contact Email Address:

Name of Pupil(s) Concerned:
(if relevant)

Name of School(s) Attended:
(if relevant)

Which site would you prefer for the location of the new Carrongrange School? ☐ Land adjacent to Moray Primary School in Grangemouth

☐ Weedingshall in Polmont

Please use the space below if you would like to explain why you prefer this location and for any other comments you have on the proposal to relocate Carrongrange School? (please continue overleaf if necessary)

Please complete and return this form by Friday 11th October 2013 to:

Carrongrange School Relocation Consultation
Education Services
Sealock House, 2 Inchyra Road
Grangemouth FK3 9XB

Or by email to: educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk