

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**Subject: NEW CARRONGRANGE SCHOOL - PROGRESS UPDATE**  
**Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE**  
**Date: 28 May 2013**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**1. BACKGROUND/PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 Education Committee on 30 October 2012 agreed the recommendations that the new Carrongrange School project will be progressed via two teams:

- (i) Site selection team
- (ii) School design team

1.2 The purpose of the report is to update members on the progress made to date by each of the two teams.

**2. SITE SELECTION TEAM**

2.1 This group has now met several times and has agreed a shortlist of 2 potential sites for the new school.

2.2 Composition of the Site Selection Team

The Site Selection Team includes members of the Education Committee (now Executive), Carrongrange School Parent Council representatives, the Headteacher and officers from Education Services and Development Services.

2.3 Stages in the Site Selection Process

The selection of a suitable site for the new Carrongrange School can be broken down into several stages:

i) Stage 1 - Identification of the Long-List of Council Owned Sites

The Corporate Asset Management Team were asked to provide details of Council owned sites that were around 2 hectares in size or larger. Details of the 11 sites identified are contained in Appendix 1.

This stage is now complete.

ii) Stage 2 - Initial Shortlist Preparation

The long-listed sites that have significant planning risks or challenges were eliminated at this stage, and an initial shortlist of 3 sites was agreed.

The details of the 3 selected and 8 rejected sites and rationale behind this selection is outlined in Appendix 1.

The 3 sites selected for further investigation at this stage were:

- (a) Land at the former Denny High School
- (b) Weedingshall in Polmont
- (c) Land adjacent to Moray Primary School in Grangemouth

This stage is now complete.

iii) Stage 3 – Refinement of Shortlist

The Site Selection Team visited the 3 shortlisted sites on 14 March 2013 and met to appraise and risk assess these remaining sites and 2 of these sites were agreed for further consideration.

The sites selected were:

- (a) Weedingshall in Polmont
- (b) Land adjacent to Moray Primary School in Grangemouth

Table 1 below shows the estimated change in average travel time for pupils getting to the proposed new school sites, based on the current school roll and compared with the current school location.

<b>Table 1</b>	Average distance (miles)	Average travel time (minutes)	Est. distance (% change)	Est. travel time (% change)
Current Carrongrange School	4.8 miles	9 minutes		
<b>Former Denny HS site</b>	<b>7.3 miles</b>	<b>13 minutes</b>	<b>+ 52%</b>	<b>+ 44%</b>
Weedingshall in Polmont	4.9 miles	8 minutes	+ 2%	- 11%
Moray Primary School site	5.9 miles	10 minutes	+ 23%	+ 11%

The former Denny High School site was rejected at this stage due to the relatively remote location from large areas of the Carrongrange School catchment which would require significantly increased travel times for a high proportion of Carrongrange pupils (see Table 1 below).

This stage is now complete.

iv) Stage 4 - Consideration of Further Sites

During the course of the earlier stages a number of additional sites were identified as possible locations by the Site Selection Team. In total, a further 6 possible sites were identified at this stage. Full details of these 6 sites are shown in Appendix 2.

The majority of these sites were ruled out due to either the site not being in council ownership or due to it being significantly less than the minimum size requirements of 2 hectares. Following this stage the team have put 1 site forward for further investigation. This was the site at Alexander Avenue. However, this site is being pursued with the Scottish Futures Trust and Scottish Government as part of the TIF initiative. Its removal for consideration as a site for the new school would adversely affect the business case for this important scheme and for this reason it cannot be shortlisted for appraisal at Stage 5.

v) Stage 5 - Shortlist Appraisal

The Site Selection Team have unanimously agreed to shortlist the following 2 sites for final appraisal and consideration:

- Weedingshall in Polmont
- Land adjacent to Moray Primary School in Grangemouth

The Site Selection Team will thoroughly review the respective merits of the short-listed sites to determine their overall suitability for the new Carrongrange School.

This appraisal will look at the educational, technical, design, transport, environmental and financial considerations. At the end of this process, the Site Selection Team will recommend whether one or both sites progress to Stage 6, for the formal consultation process.

It is currently anticipated that a report to request approval to formally consult on a preferred site or choice of sites for the new school will be brought to the Education Executive in August 2013.

vi) Stage 6 - Formal Consultation with Stakeholders

A formal statutory consultation will take place in accordance with the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010 to ascertain the views of stakeholders on the preferred site or sites for the new school.

Any proposal to relocate a school requires a formal statutory consultation in accordance with the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010.

The consultation is currently scheduled for September/October 2013 and will inform Stage 7.

vii) Stage 7 - Recommendation and Selection of a Site

The Site Selection Team consider the information gathered in Stages 5 (shortlist appraisal) and 6 (the consultation) and will recommend the preferred site for the new Carrongrange School. It is currently anticipated that a report will be prepared for the Education Executive by December 2013.

### **3. SCHOOL DESIGN TEAM**

- 3.1 The School Design Team have already begun work on establishing requirements for the new school and will conclude their work in 2014 once the site for the new school has been agreed. This will give sufficient time for the procurement and construction process to ensure the school will open as planned in August 2016.

3.2 Joint Working Arrangements with Renfrewshire Council

Education Services are very pleased to be able to report that the Design Team will be working collaboratively and jointly with Renfrewshire Council on the design specification, as they are also planning to build a similar school within similar timescales as Falkirk.

This exciting joint initiative will potentially also provide added benefits for both councils:

- Facilitate wider professional and technical dialogue to support and challenge each other through the course of these projects
- Access to previous school build and design experiences

- Sharing of good practice
- Reduction in professional design costs
- Demonstration of both added and best value to the project overall

The Scottish Futures Trust have been involved in the early discussions and are fully supportive of this joint working arrangement.

### 3.3 Composition of the School Design Team

The core team comprises of Education Officers (including Additional Support Needs specialists), School Architects (Building Design Team) and the Carrongrange School Headteacher. Other officers and specialists will be involved as required during the project. The staff, pupils and parents will also have an important and valuable role to play in this stage.

### 3.4 Stages in the School Design Process

#### i) Stage 1 – Prepare Core Specification

This stage will include a review of good practice design for special schools, site visits and an analysis of the requirements of existing users. A schedule of essential and desirable accommodation and facilities will be agreed to inform the next stage of the design process.

This stage is now underway.

#### ii) Stage 2 – Prepare Design Options

This stage can commence when a site has been chosen. Design options will be prepared by the Building Design Team based on the core specification, site characteristics and available budget. The design options will be discussed and refined iteratively by the School Design Team until agreement is reached on the design or designs to be consulted on.

#### iii) Stage 3 – Consult Stakeholders on Design Options

All stakeholders in the project will be consulted on the design options and their views fed into the final design.

#### iv) Stage 4 – Finalise and Agree Design

The final design will be prepared and agreed by the Site Design Team and this will form the basis for the procurement and build.

#### v) Stage 5 – Procurement/Tendering

Further refinement of the new school's design may be required during and after the procurement process for the construction of the school. The School Design Team will continue to be involved at this stage as required.

#### 4. OVERALL PROJECT TIMEFRAMES

4.1 The high level project plan shown below illustrates the timescales and dependencies:

	2013				2014				2015				2016			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Site Appraisal																
Consultation																
Agree Site																
School Design																
Procurement																
Construction																
School opens																

#### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Education Executive are asked to

- i) note progress made to date by both the Site Selection and Design Team as outlined in this report
- ii) endorse the 2 short-listed sites detailed in Section 2.3(v) for further consideration by the Site Selection Team
- iii) note that a report requesting approval to formally consult on the preferred site(s) on the preferred site, as recommended by the Site Selection Team, will be presented at a future Education Executive.

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**Director of Education**

**Date:** 16 May 2013

Contact Officer: Gary Greenhorn, ext 6684

#### LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL