

Mull Campus Pre-engagement feedback August / September 2022

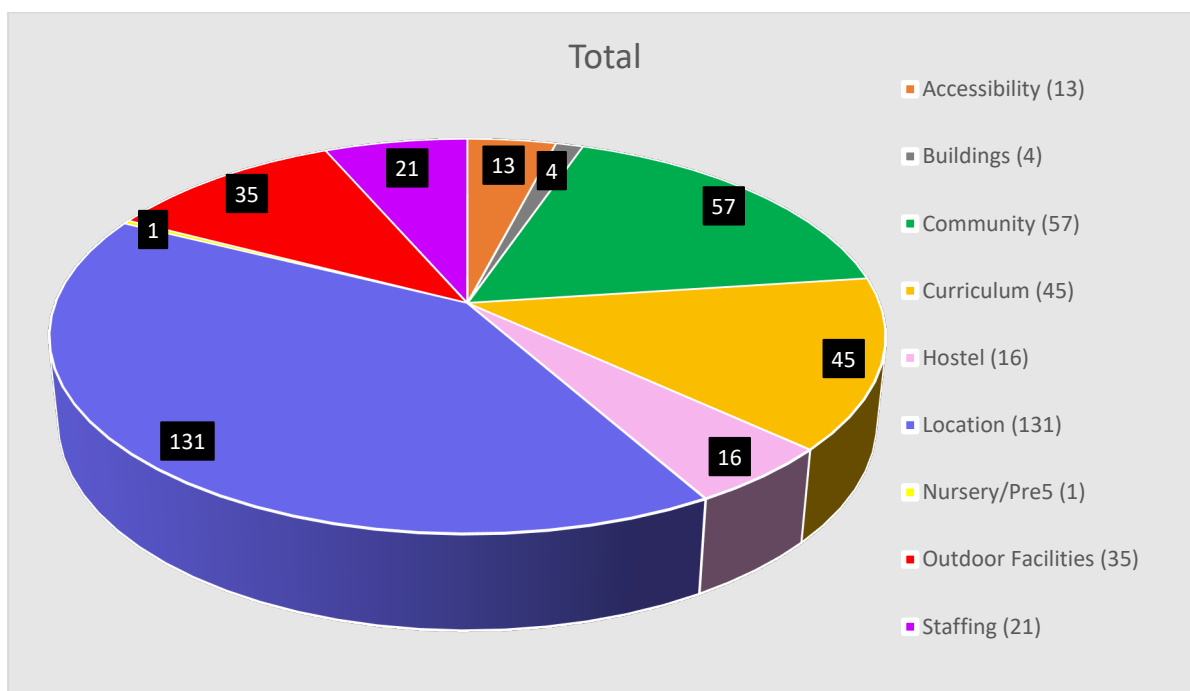
The non-statutory pre-engagement with communities was presented both face to face and electronic.

There were sessions held by core Project Mull Team Members in Tobermory on 11 August 2022, and in Buessan on 07 September 2022. During these sessions a number of questions were asked and it was agreed that these questions along with the answers given, would be collated to ensure all could see and understand the responses provided.

There were also a series of pupil engagements led by members of the central education team in each of the primary schools, Tobermory High School and those pupils who travel to Oban High School. In three of the schools, these engagement sessions were also held in Gaelic. The children and young people from these sessions have provided some really helpful and reflective responses and comments.

There were over 200 written comments and responses provided through the face to face sessions and the online platforms, with a majority confirming support for the project.

Comments covered a variety of areas which are categorised below:



The queries received have been collated below with the answers that were given. We will of course update this as we progress, with further questions as they are received and answered:

Accessibility

Q. If a new campus and School is being looked at could the location and access for full size coaches be a factor.
A. the location will form part of the Detailed Options Appraisal. Once a site has been selected, the design will require to look at appropriate pick up and drop off locations.

Q. Will there be a bus to pick you up?

A. School Transport will be made available in line with the Councils Pupil Transport Policy

Q. Will the roads be improved to aid the children transport to a new campus?

A. This does not fall within the boundaries of the LEIP funding application and therefore will not be looked at as part of this project.

Buildings

All of the following questions have the same answer :

Q. What will happen to the school estate? Please don't sell off the primary schools

Q. I can support as long as the rug is not pulled out from us small schools. Where would staff go? Families more here for small schools. Complete agreement that a new campus is needed, but the who and where are key! Small rural schools do not want to close - can we be guaranteed to be left??

Q. my concern is that if it's a 2-18 year campus, the council will close all the small village primary schools and very young kids in outlying areas will be forced to travel for two hours a day.

Q. Absorption of smaller schools?

Q. Why would you need to decant all primary schools?

Q. Wonder whether remote island PS will remain or be drawn into a big campus

Q. Will the primary and pre five unit move to a new campus?

Q. Are there any risk that a shiny new campus increases the risk of closing local primary schools? I think many of us need reassurance on this

Q. Is the plan to replace all primary schools with one 'super campus'? Your statistics about under occupancy of schools suggest this might be the intention, but this would not be acceptable to me, or to most people on Mull.

Q. There are rumours floating around the community that should we be successful in a bid it could mean the closure of one or more of the primary schools across the island, this rumour needs to be quashed by the council as soon as possible, conversely if there is any truth to the rumour then I think this should be shared with the community urgently as it has a huge impact on whether we should proceed with the bid or not

A. There is currently no intention to amalgamate or close schools, unless as part of the Consultation process, there is a clear desire from the islands to look at this.

Q. Concerns around managing for the next 5 years in this building & that the prospect of a new school would mean no improvement to current facilities for this cohort? Again, could how to mitigate against this be part of the process?

A. The Council will continue to maintain existing buildings in line with Council Policy

Q. Could the Council collaborate with BE-ST (<https://www.be-st.build/>) to consider sustainable and innovative solutions to the challenges of island building and climate conditions? This is an opportunity to aim for the highest standards, and not just build to cost

A. If the Council is awarded funding through LEIP there are a number of consultants who will look at all aspects of the build

Q. We would also request clarification of the meaning of the following sentence. "of these mull is considered to be top priority based on suitability of existing estate."

Q. Why do we need a new school?

A. The Learning Estate Strategy agreed by elected members at Council in August 2021 looked at all of the schools in Argyll and Bute and a suitability survey was carried out on each school. Both suitability and condition surveys are criteria led and include aspects such as accessibility, purpose build spaces, social spaces etc. The overall Suitability band for Tobermory High School was category C. As this is the only secondary school within Argyll and Bute with a category C for Suitability, and the primary across the whole school estate with the lowest suitability scoring, it was considered to be a priority.

There were a number of questions in relation to what the building will look like.

Q. How big will the new school be?

Q. How many classrooms would a new school have?

Q. What would the school be called?

Q. the school have balconies and open central spaces like in some of the pictures?

A. All of the questions noted above will form part of the design process should we be awarded the funding when a design team is appointed.

Q. When would the building be built?

A. If awarded the funding, the school requires to be operational by December 2027

Q. Will it be a primary and secondary school?

Q. Might a junior secondary help with very young children having to leave home at 11 years?

A. The application for LEIP funding has been made for a 2-18 campus on Mull.

Q. Could the Council sell the land our school is on and build houses only for islanders or for teachers?

A. No decisions have been made on any potential surplus ground at this stage.

Q. Would you please build a school on Mull that we can go to each day and come home each night?

Q. Will you build a new school on Mull so I can study and don't have to leave my brother and sisters?

A. The consultation process will include a full site options appraisal which will determine where the campus can be located

Q. If money for a new build is not forthcoming what then would be proposed with regard to buildings no longer fit for purpose? And what would that say about a pillar of state provision for the community of Mull?

A. The cost of such a project is substantial. It would be a decision for Elected Members for a new facility without the LEIP funding.

Community

Q. Would community facilities be as difficult to access as Salen Community Hall attached to Salen Primary

A. The intention is to create an island community asset with facilities available for community to use as appropriate.

Curriculum

Q. I wonder is one hybrid could be explored so that high school children could be educated on the Ross? Given that we are looking at new models, we could explore new models of teaching?

Q. Gaelic & ELC and if people living more remotely will need to travel further for school.

A. There are elements of funding to look at enabling the infrastructure capabilities for future digital technologies to encourage new models of teaching. LEIP funding could allow for new models of teaching for example using digital technology to deliver learning to different sites

There were a number of questions around what would be included:

Q. What will the new school have in it? Will there be school dinners? Will there be a gym hall?

Q. Will there be a cinema? Will there be computers? Would there be common rooms like Hogwarts?

Q. Will there be lockers? Will there be school breakfasts? Would the new school have a library?

Q. How many toilets will there be? How long would school last? Will there be a drama studio?

Q. Will there be a place for different religious beliefs to practice and pray? Q. Would wrap around care be part of the campus?

Q. Could we please have some bee classes? Will Gaelic Medium Education be available in the new school?

A. Some great suggestions and ideas which are all things that will be drawn out through engagement during the design development stage of the project

Hostel

Q. If funding available why not add a hostel on to the campus so if parents from the south of the island don't want their children to travel to Oban High could still get taught on the island and they are only about two hours away if they need to get in touch

Q. Hostel for Bunessan pupils?

Q. Maybe a solution could involve a small hostel being built or ONE bus to transport numbers from the Ross of Mull.

Q. Will the new school have a hostel?

Q. If a campus was built nearer Tobermory, would there be accommodation for children?

A. Hostel accommodation does not qualify for LEIP funding. If there was a clear desire from the Islands to deliver this, there would need to be alternative funding to support it

Q. does this mean the assumption is already there that pupils from Iona and the Ross will go to Oban?

Q. Will our children still have the option to attend Oban High School and will the hostel be funded for us still?

Q. Would the option of Oban still be available?

A. There will still be an option to attend Oban High School

Location

There were lots and lots of questions around where the campus would be.

Q. Can a campus be located on outskirts of Tobermory? Where will the school be?

Q. Will the new school be in Tobermory? Who would be attending if it is a joint campus?

Q. Why would hundreds of kids be made to travel unnecessarily to accommodate 27 pupils from the Ross of Mull? Could the ferry come to Tobermory rather than Craignure?

Q. Where? Centre of gravity is Tobermory. Best somewhere in Tobermory - land just outside Tobermory possible e.g. opposite Biscuit Factory?

Q. There's land around the golf course area of the town, I don't know if that would be a possibility?

Q. If the school were to move outside of Tob, would you put a school bus in place to get the children to and from school? Will you build a new school in Craignure? What stage & how would a location be chosen?

Q. Important to choose a location that will work for the majority - how will pupils be transported etc?

Q. If decant & rebuild on same site, where to decant to? Some don't want a new school, some want to go to Oban - can we still do that? Would a new school be built around Craignure / a central point on the island?

Q. If money is to be invested in a Mull campus, can we use it as an opportunity to unite all of Mulls High School children and allow Ross of Mull kids a home life?

Q. I would be grateful if you could clarify for me exactly what you meant when you talked to me about the role of costing in the choice of site for the new campus. Did you mean that cost (site, pupil transport, staffing) would need to be taken into consideration but the ultimate decision would be based on the best solution for the youngsters and their community? Or simply that the cheapest option would be chosen?

Q. The proposal, as presented to the community, does not state what form the new school would take, and where it would be located. Has this been decided already, and if so, why have we not been given this information?

Q. What provision would there be for staff that don't drive?

A. This stage of the funding application does not need a detailed proposal. If we receive LEIP funding, a key step will be to carry out a detailed Options Appraisal on sites across Mull to determine the best location for the Campus

Q. Could we have two high schools instead of one big new one, one school in the north and one in the south of the island?

A. There will be a lot of competition for funding. The Funding application can only be for one new campus on Mull.

Q. This might allow for our single track roads to Craignure to improve if location there?

A. The LEIP funding is not available for this kind of work. The funding application will be for 1 new Campus on Mull. It is hoped that this could be a catalyst for further investment on the island however, any further infrastructure investment is not directly linked to the LEIP funding

Nursery / Pre 5

Q. After Salen ELC being recently refurbished, will that building then continue to provide ELC provision?

Q. Why would you want to decant all pre 5 units to one area? So 45 mins travel time to attend nursery?

Q. Huge expense in recent years to improve ELCs....for what, if they close? And what about all of the staff?

Q. Will all the primary and nursery schools be closed and all the children on the island have to travel to the new school?

Q. What happens to existing primary & ELC? How far would 2 year olds (and 4 & 5 yr olds) have to travel?

A. There is no intention to change ELC settings.

Outdoor Facilities

Q. Will there be a forest in the playground? Will there be a swimming pool?

Q. What will the new school be like outside?

A. All of these are things that will be drawn out through engagement during the design development stage of the project

Staffing

Q. What happens to the head teachers of Primary Schools? Would staff be reduced then if all at one campus?

Q. I am very concerned of the jobs which will have to go - closing of primary schools will lose so many jobs - cleaners, janitors, office, CR Assistants, teachers - a new campus sounds wonderful but no for employment

A. There is currently no intention to amalgamate or close schools, unless as part of the Consultation process, there is a clear desire from the islands to look at this.

Q. Could accommodation for teacher be thought about as part of a new scheme?

Q. Worry about infrastructure, housing & staff and how this will be developed alongside this projects

A. Staff accommodation does not qualify for LEIP funding.

Q. Will there be any new teachers?

A. School staffing is determined by pupil numbers and schools have delegated responsibility for recruitment. If the roll of the school rises this could lead to new teaching staff

Q. If the school was in a different place, what would happen to the teachers?

A. Staff will be consulted and given notice before the change of location took effect. It is expected that staff and pupils would transfer to the new school.

Other

Q. Feedback on what Oban High kids said during their consultation, please? And were they given this opportunity for it to be anonymous?

A. Pupils who live on Mull and Iona were given the opportunity to contribute. All responses and comments were anonymous. There were some queries asking for assurance that attending Oban High would still be an option (see questions noted at "Hostel" section)

Q. Why weren't bids put in a phase 1 or 2?

A. The Council was not in a position to make a commitment to the LEIP funding process until now

Q. How many other schools in Scotland are Cat C?

A. This information is not available to us at this time

Q. Should the bid be successful, it is essential that a comprehensive and island wide (including Iona and Ulva) consultation process is put in place and all views are faithfully respected and recorded, can you assure me that this will be done?

Q. What will you do to ensure that the children of Mull are heard, and that their rights are respected?

Q. Will the consultation recognise the central role schools have in isolated/rural communities?

A. The Council is clear as to the statutory duties placed on it in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. That legislation identifies a number of "relevant stakeholders" who the Council must directly engage with as part of any consultation exercise should the bid be successful and should a "relevant proposal" (in terms of the Act) be formulated. In addition, given the potential impacts on some of our island communities, the Council will also consider whether it is necessary to conduct an Islands Communities Impact Assessment (in terms of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018) alongside the 2010 Act consultation, at the relevant point in the overall process. The Education Service will supported by colleagues from the Northern Alliance and Education Scotland in terms of the processes to be followed and fulfilling the Council's numerous statutory duties.