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21 January 2022

Dear Councillors Perry and Dickie

In our meeting on Thursday morning you asked again about our views on the suitability of the Royal Victoria site as a site for a proposed Gaelic school.

It is for the Council to formulate the relevant proposals under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and to determine the timing of any consultation - statutory or otherwise. As you know, where a relevant proposal constitutes a permanent closure under that Act, Scottish Ministers may have a role later in the process to consider whether grounds for call-in exist. Separately the Council will be aware of the provision in section 2A of the Act which may apply where a decision is made by the Council not to implement a closure proposal.

You have however asked that I put in writing the information that I have on the Royal Victoria site. I understand that at this point in time, NHS Lothian is not describing the Royal Victoria site as surplus to their requirements. It is being used for car parking space and if this was lost to the Western General Hospital (WGH) then I expect an alternative location would have to be found and there is likely to be a cost associated with that. We also understand that NHS Lothian plan to use the Royal Victoria site as a decant centre when the building work starts on the new regional cancer centre at the WGH. There is no date for this work to start and we have been informed that it may be several years away. If the Royal Victoria site was to become the site of a GME school within the timeframe which it is anticipated the site would be needed for decant purposes then again an alternative decant site would need to be found introducing further additional cost and disruption for the WGH during that period.

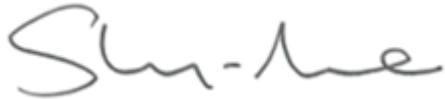
In terms of financial support you will be aware that the Scottish Government has provided significant funding both for the refurbishment work at Taobh na Pairce and at Darroch High School and we would be willing to consider further financial support at an appropriate stage. We note that at the time that funding was provided for Darroch reference was made to establishing GME primary provision at that site yet this does not appear to be being considered as part of the draft consultation at this time.

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As you know the Scottish Government had offered financial support for a feasibility study for central sites in the city and I continue to be happy to work with you on this. I do also note however, your reiteration that the Council's firm view after full consideration is that there are no alternative sites.

Yours sincerely



SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE

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