

**Banff and Macduff Q and A**  
**17<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Q. Why are Banff and Macduff having to use Common Good money when other areas in Aberdeenshire are getting capital projects off the council? We're having to sell our assets to get what Fraserburgh and other places are getting from the council.

A. Key to this is replacement facilities for those which are on common ground. What we're estimating with the current proposals is even with capital receipts from Tesco it's unlikely to be sufficient. We're estimating there will be a shortfall – that will be made up from capital from the council. It will go into council spending plans and will be funded in the way that we have mentioned.

Q. Why do we have to have a Tesco representative here tonight? This meeting is supposed to be about how we use the money.

A. To make sure that Tesco have comfort as well. We're delighted Gloria (Coats, Tesco representative) has come a long way just to show we're in this together. We're here to show the commitment from the council and Tesco. (answer from Tesco: As the Chief Executive said, we're just here to observe. We were invited by the council. We're reiterating our commitment to build the store.)

Q. Why has it taken so long? It seems to always be that Banff and Macduff miss out on so much stuff.

A. That is a very good question and one we're all conscious of. We're keen to move forward as quickly as we can. There have been a lot of challenges in terms of disposing of Common Good Land.

Q. There are so many questions to be answered: when are we getting a Tesco and when are we getting sports facilities?

A. We're keen to move forward as quickly as possible once we know what the communities want and need.

Q. (In terms of timescales...) are you talking two years, three years before you're in a position to build this?

A. The best case scenario is that all these facilities will take about a year to construct. There's a design period, a planning period and a legal period to take into consideration. With all this, to be realistic, you're speaking two years for some of these facilities, in the worst case, three years. There is little point in building something that is not required and needed by the community - we need to get this right. You can't go backwards, you can't rewrite history.

Q. Can we have a breakdown of where money will be allocated?

A. Once we come back to the next planned meeting in July we will have much more accurate figures, though we do have an estimate. Once we have taken community views from tonight's meeting and worked them into the plans, we'll know what the detailed plan will cost.

Q. Of the £10million that is going to be up for grabs, is it all going on sports facilities, replacement facilities, or is there money going on other projects?

A. There isn't £10million up for grabs. There is money allocated from the sale of Canal Park for replacement facilities at Banff and Macduff, although it is unlikely that this will be enough to cover all the costs of the facilities. The council will make provision from the Capital Plan.

There will also be a third community engagement meeting in Banff and Macduff entitled "regeneration" – further details will be available about that meeting, but it's the opportunity for everyone to have their say on the wider regeneration of Banff and Macduff.

Q. Can you give an assurance these will be facilities the community can afford? It worried me that in the local paper one of our councillors was saying they would like these facilities to be privately run. I want a commitment that it will be affordable.

A. It's fundamentally a priority for the council making these facilities affordable. Affordability is one of the key drivers. The facilities will be affordable, they have to be affordable. They have to get inclusion right as well. The presumption is that we will run them ourselves. A number of years ago, as a council we were looking at whether we should outsource services or run them internally. The conclusion the council came to was it did not see the advantage of outsourcing council facilities. In terms of anything the council runs, it will stay in house.

The Active Aberdeenshire card has been a great success in terms of giving good, affordable access. That's something the council is committed to building on. We want to get people to use these facilities in terms of their health, promoting good health.

The key thing is, what is the need here? Whether it's the layout of the building, or opening times, or accessibility, we need to get into all that kind of detail.

Q. Why the change of heart? Why is the present arrangement being discarded? What confidence can we have the new arrangement won't be discarded? Tesco want it to run as long as possible to keep out other stores such as Morrisons, Asda and so forth.

A. Time has gone on. We want to know what it is we actually need now. The council now is quite clearly disposed to having great facilities based around its schools. It's a good time to pause and ask what is it that we need in the future and how can we make that affordable and sustainable.

Q. What were the reasons for discarding the original plan?

A. We haven't discarded them. We haven't actually at this point discarded anything we've simply opened up the discussion.

Q. You say you're taking a pause tonight to see what we need in new facilities. Where have you guys been for the past 12 years asking the various community groups over the generations past what they need?

A. The truth of the matter is we are here now and we can't go back over that period, we could say with hindsight: "Why didn't we do this earlier?" We want to make sure the Tesco goes ahead and it's going to go ahead.

Q. What's the (proposed) drop in centre going to be used for? It looks like it's going to be built to the detriment of other things.

A. Banff Academy (the elements of the proposal sited there) was always there as an option in 2004. As officers we struggled with the concept of a need for a drop in centre but we've included that as an option. By no means is it cast in stone. The price for that facility might be better used to improve the (proposed) Myrus facility.

Q. What's the provision for early years?

A. The council is trying to maximise the amount of support we're giving to 0-5 year olds. We want to look at the very early years as well. If that's not what you want, we're here to look at it. The intention is to have full time provision for three year olds initially, both in Banff and Macduff. Eventually we want to offer some provision to two year olds and some kind of voluntary service to 0-2 year olds as well. It's in no way cast in stone.

Q. What's going to happen to the other Tesco site in Banff when this new store opens?

A. As it is a leased site, presumably it would go on the market and would be open for bids. It would certainly be part of our regeneration of Banff.

Q. Are you actually looking into what kids want? It's the kids that are going to be using these facilities in the future. Are there any plans to get out there and ask what's needed?

A. There are young people at the meeting tonight and we will continue to invite their views on what they want to see. We are holding a series of youth engagement meetings around Aberdeenshire at the moment and will continue to seek their views on a whole range of issues.

Q. You said you wanted the new facilities to be in place before the store. Is that the case, will that be all the facilities?

A. As far as Aberdeenshire Council is concerned, all the facilities will be in place.

Q. Are the needs of the population what they will be in 20 years time? Is the customer going to be there in 20 years time? There are plenty of older people in both towns.

A. We'll look at it regardless. You've got to remember there's always a younger population coming through as well. The Ellon Academy complex construction started this year and the plans were put together pretty quickly. We do need a balance because our population is increasing. Our population of older people is increasing faster than anywhere else in Scotland. This point is well made.

Q. If the Better Life Centre gets built can we be sure it will be totally run by the council and won't become an endless drain on resources?

A. There are absolutely no guarantees; however drains on council resources are something we actively try to avoid. The facility will be run in line with the way all council facilities are.

The Banff Better Life Centre would not be run by the council, it would be run by a trust. The council's role in that would be to make sure there is the right business plan in place and there is the capacity for it to be run by that trust.

Q. What steps will you take to help the regeneration of our community given that there may be a negative impact on shops? (from the Tesco development)

A. (Tesco representative) We are making a very big investment in Banff. The location of the new store is as close to the town centre as we can get it. We want to keep people shopping in Banff and stop people leaving Banff to shop. We spend a lot of money and time finding these sites which aren't the easiest sites to deliver. We do have a big commitment to working with communities and also working with suppliers.

Q. As I understand the situation, the Better Life Centre is linked with the former proposal. If the Banff Academy proposal goes ahead the Better Life centre doesn't. What provision is there to take on board the facilities for older people that were included in the Better Life Centre that do not appear to be reflected in the proposal at the Academy? One of my concerns is that there will be a lot of competing interests, particularly for access during the day, because that's when older people are out and about. What provision are you making for that?

A. If we haven't allowed enough community provision we will look at that. In terms of the use of space, we're very much on board and listening and seeing what's required and what the community needs. There's a belief that access will be dominated by the school – it will be a mix of school and community use and we need to get that right. Take the new swimming pool at Fraserburgh for example, it has the right model of need and we need to build on that.

**ends**

**\*\*We tried to make this as wide an invitation as we could – if there's anyone who wasn't at the meeting we want to encourage them to get involved. We want to get as many views as we can so at the next meeting we can say this is what you said, this is how we've acted on it, let's move on and get this done.\*\***