

BRIEFING FOR MEETING WITH BILL NICOL, HOMETOWN FOUNDATION, 25 OCTOBER 14:00 – 14:45

What	Meeting with Bill Nicol, Project Director, to discuss state-funded autonomous schools and the education governance review
Where	Room T4.23 Scottish Parliament
Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central mission of this Government is education – delivering excellence and equity for all children and young people by raising standard for all and closing the educational attainment gap between those from the least and most deprived backgrounds.• We want the governance review to be a genuine open debate about how best to deliver excellence and equity for ALL children and young people
Who	Bill Nicol, Project Director, Hometown Foundation (<i>NB: you met with Bill regarding his Owenstown project in 2013. The planning application was rejected.</i>)
Why	You have accepted an invitation (June 2016) from Bill Nicol to listen to the approach of the Hometown Foundation to the education improvement agenda including Bill's current work with headteachers and parent groups to promote state funded autonomous schools.
Official Support	[redacted] ext: [redacted], [redacted]

Briefing Contents

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Annex C	Letter from Bill Nicol - pilot for state-funded autonomous schools
Annex D	Background - Governance Reform

Agenda

- 14:00 Welcome and introductions
- 14:05 Discuss the approach of the Hometown Foundation to the education improvement agenda including the current work with head teachers and parent groups to promote state funded autonomous schools
- 14:45 Close

Biography – Bill Nicol

Bill Nicol BA (Hons) Town and Country Planning, MRTPI, DiP (LE), DiP (BA). Bill was born and brought up in South Lanarkshire. After graduating from Glasgow School of Art in 1984 Bill worked for two Local Authorities, two Local Enterprise Companies, an Economic Development Partnership, two public/private joint venture partnerships and Scottish Enterprise National as Head of Property and Director of the National Waterfront project. Prior to starting work with the Hometown Foundation, Bill was Chief Executive of a pathfinder Urban Regeneration Company.

Bill has spent his career working with individuals and communities to help them become more resilient. Bill is also a Trustee of Workshop and Artists' Studio Provision Scotland Ltd and an Ambassador for Ocean Youth Trust Scotland. Bill was formerly an ambassador for the Princes Scottish Youth Business Trust.

The Hometown Foundation describes itself as an organisation which has been formed to enable community development based on co-operative principles. Their key aim is to enable local communities to become stronger by having much greater control over the things which are most important to them. To achieve this, the Foundation aims to provide the means to transfer ownership and power from the state to local communities focussed on providing the best possible outcomes in their own areas.

Their first project was Owenstown, a new town in South Lanarkshire. The aim of the project was to provide eight thousand new homes alongside eight thousand new jobs, and the intention was it would be wholly owned and controlled by its residents via the Owenstown Cooperative Society. The planning application was rejected by Councillors and at the appeal stage.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS FOR STATE-FUNDED AUTONOMOUS SCHOOLS

Key points

Bill Nicol has submitted three business plans to the Scottish Government for establishing state-funded autonomous schools, with another two ready to be submitted (St Joseph's, Al-Qalam, Steiner, Mirrenpark School and Aberdeen Green School respectively). There have been a number of discussions with Mr Nicol and the individual schools regarding the proposals, at Ministerial and official level. At various points, we have asked for further information regarding a number of areas of the individual plans, for example on:

- financial sustainability and expectations of funding from SG
- capacity and capability of staff
- provision of ASN
- admissions policies

[redacted]

We understand that Mr Nicol is conducting a number of conversations with individuals from differing sectors (for example, with EIS, Glasgow University, etc) regarding his proposals and how to develop these further.

In his discussions with the Scottish Government, Mr Nicol cites Jordanhill and Newlands Junior College as precedents for the establishment of state-funded autonomous schools. [redacted]

Recent correspondence

In a recent letter to Bill (in reply to his letter of 9 September), you outlined that these proposals cannot be seen in isolation, as they raise issues in relation to the governance of, and principles underpinning, education. They will therefore be considered as part of the review. However, in a recent discussion (13 September) with parents of St Joseph's, you indicated that you would reach a decision on their school prior to the consultation period concluding, [redacted]

Bill's most recent letter of 20 September (Annex C) acknowledges both these points and proposes that we use the schools as a pilot, supported by Scottish Government funding. He will discuss this with you further at the meeting, though officials have made it clear to him that no decisions will be made at the meeting.

[redacted], one of the parents at St Joseph's parents, wrote to you on 7 October, expressing her concerns with the approach in relation to St Joseph's. Advice and a draft reply to her were provided to you on 11 October.

Lines to take

- We remain committed to publicly funded, comprehensive school education that delivers excellence and equity for all children and young people

- The proposals for autonomous schools raise fundamental questions about how schools are run in Scotland.
- It is right therefore to consider this question in the context of the governance review, in ensuring we deliver excellence and equity for all children and young people.
- We are happy to consider the evidence you have submitted so far, and anything further you develop over the course of the review, in informing our evidence base for change.

Issues to avoid

- [redacted].

THE EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT AGENDA AND PILOT FOR STATE-FUNDED AUTONOMOUS SCHOOLS – LETTER



John Swinney MSP
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary
for Education and Skills
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh, EH11 9DB
20 September 2016

The Hometown Foundation
Mechanics Workshop
New Lanark ML11 9DB
Tel. 0845 686 4646
info@hometown.co.uk

Dear Mr Swinney

The education improvement agenda and a pilot for state-funded autonomous schools

We were encouraged by your report "Delivering Excellence and Equality in Scottish Education" which seeks to reform education in Scotland. However, we are concerned that this welcome initiative may be held up or lost altogether in yet another consultation process. That said, we understand that the possibility exists for an earlier decision and that does raise the prospect of doing something that could prove helpful to all concerned.

As you know three draft business plans have been submitted to date:

- St Joseph's Community Primary School - Initial draft submitted 31 March 2015;
- Al-Qalam Community School - submitted 26 November 2015; and
- Steiner Community School, Glasgow - submitted 18 February, 2016.

In addition, two business plans (Mirren Park School, Ferguslie Park, Paisley and the Green/STEM School in Maryculter, Aberdeen) have been completed but on hold since May 2016, as requested by your Learning Directorate, pending "feedback on how the financials are presented on the first three".

We believe that there is a very strong correlation between the three state-funded autonomous school bids which have been submitted and what you are seeking to do with regards to the education delivery plan. The first three plans and the next two, which will now be submitted, strongly reflect your desire to empower teachers, schools and the community. These schools are operational, with management in place. They all have the necessary support mechanisms at their disposal and ambition to excel.

As a practical way forward we would like propose that these plans are considered as a pilot. Not only would this test the water with regards to state-funded autonomous schools, but it would add greatly to the consultation process to have prototyping schools actually operating. This would allow genuine Scottish examples of delivering enhanced and cost effective education "by diverse means" within a carefully controlled environment.

Initial discussions have taken place with Professor Trevor Gale, Head of Education, University of Glasgow with a view to his department providing an independent evaluation of our proposal, to monitor and review outcomes across these interventions. This again could feed into the wider work of the Government together with the wealth of other relevant information available.

As previously highlighted to you and your colleagues, there is no need to make any legislative changes to allow these schools to be directly funded. The necessary power already exists, and is being used for other direct state-funded schools – such as Jordanhill School, Newlands Junior College and specialist schools.

We would be more than happy to demonstrate how these pilot schools would work together, share innovation and good practice and contribute to your consultation process and wider agenda for educational reform.

We would appreciate your thoughts on this approach and look forward to discussing this option with you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[redacted] Founder and Curriculum Leader, Al-Qalam Primary School, Glasgow
[redacted], [redacted], Steiner Community School, Glasgow
[redacted], Director, Aberdeen Green School
[redacted], Mirrenpark School, Ferguslie Park, Paisley
Bill Nicol, Director, Hometown Foundation

Cc'd [redacted], Chair of the Parents Group, St Joseph's Primary School, Milngavie

BACKGROUND - GOVERNANCE REFORM

ISSUE:

Governance Review

The DFM launched *Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review* on the 13th of September. The governance review seeks views on how education – from early years to secondary school level – should be run.

At the heart of the governance review is the presumption that decisions about children's learning and school life should be made at school level. The governance review seeks views on how teachers, parents and communities can be empowered to have a stronger voice in the running of their schools. It also seeks views on: commitments to establish new educational regions and how collaboration through school clusters can be improved; and on how funding can be made fairer ahead of consulting on proposals for a fair funding formula in March 2017.

The governance review will run until **6 January 2017**.

Bureaucracy Review Education Scotland published on Monday 19 September its Review of local authorities' actions to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy and undue workload in schools. The review found:

- Just under half of all local authorities (15) have been proactive in ensuring bureaucracy and unnecessary workload are addressed effectively.
- In 14 local authorities, whilst workload demands and requirements placed on schools through central guidance and systems were generally reasonable, local authorities needed to do more to ensure best practice was consistently adopted, and any poor practice addressed
- In 3 local authorities (Shetland, Moray and Falkirk), the impact of actions was not yet sufficiently evident. Whilst Inspectors recognised specific local obstacles to progress, further improvement is now required.

St Joseph's

DFM last met with parents on 22nd June and has been considering their proposal regarding a parent-led school. On 13 September at DFM's request, officials informed the parents that the DFM had not reached a decision and the proposal would be considered in the wider context of the Governance Review.

Top Lines

- **We believe decisions about children's learning and school life should be decided at school level.**
- We want to **empower teachers, parents, children and communities** to drive improvement in education and we will oversee the **biggest devolution of powers** to our schools including through the encouragement of **school clusters** and the creation of **new education regions**.
- We welcome the report on tackling bureaucracy from the Chief Inspector of Schools and **we are determined to take action to tackle workload and allow our teachers to do what they do best – educating our young people.**
- **It is right that we consider the role that every part of our education system plays in achieving excellence and equity** for our children and young people. **They deserve a world leading education.**
- We remain **committed to publicly funded, comprehensive school education** because we know it is collaboration not marketisation that drives improvement

QUOTE: Iain Gray, Scottish Parliament 13 September 2016 *"Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education is a laudable aim and one that we share"*

We are committed to delivering excellence and equity for ALL our children and young people

- Our approach is based on evidence of what works not right wing ideological dogma. There will be **no academisation of Scottish education and no grammar schools.**
- The report by the **Institute for Fiscal Studies on 12 September** destroys the myth that Grammar schools help children from poorer backgrounds. **The report is clear – Grammar Schools may offer an opportunity for some pupils but that comes at the cost of "increasing inequality"** and children from "deprived backgrounds" are much less likely to attend existing grammar schools than children whose parents are financially better off.
- The Fiscal Studies report is also clear that there are alternatives – the London Challenge which has helped to inform our own Attainment Challenge succeeded in both improving results and reducing inequality.
- This Government is committed to ensuring that every child has a chance to succeed. No child should be labelled as a failure at age 11 and have their future options limited.

QUOTE: Larry Flanagan, EIS 13 September 2016 *"The Scottish Government has made clear that it does not intend to take schools out of local authority control nor does it intend to mimic the disasters of UK policy in terms of Academies or Free Schools. That is to be welcomed... At a time when the UK government seems determined to embed division - largely based around socio-economic factors - within its school system, it is important that we take a different approach here in Scotland."*

It is collaboration and cooperation not marketisation and competition which drives improvement

- We will establish new **educational regions** and encourage **school clusters** to ensure best practice is shared more systematically across Scottish education
- In their review of Scottish Education the OECD told us that *'teachers who work in clusters of professional collaboration have a stronger impact on student achievement'* and recommended *'that connecting schools to take collective responsibility for each other's improvement and results should be a top priority'*.
- The OECD also highlighted the need for greater and more effective working amongst local authorities
- **The Education Scotland tackling bureaucracy review shows what is achievable through greater collaboration between schools and teachers** - strongly performing local authorities ensured that robust inter-school networks were in place to develop and share good practice.

We remain committed to national bargaining

- We have no plans to change how we approach pay and conditions for teachers.
- The governance review ask questions about how we can empower teachers and ensure they get the right support at a school, local, regional and national level.

The strength of our education system rests on the quality of the relationship between teachers, early years practitioners and children, and the exercise of clear and effective leadership.

- **We trust our teachers and early years practitioners.** Our review starts from the presumption that decisions about individual children's learning and school life should be taken at school level.
- We believe that the **best people to decide the future of our communities are the people who live in those communities.**
- It is right therefore that we ask whether some decisions which are currently made at a local authority level should be made at a school level and also whether some services currently delivered at a national level should in future be delivered at a local or regional level.

QUOTE: John Swinney – ‘Scotland 2016’, 6 September 2016 *“I’ve made it expressly clear that local authorities will continue to exercise democratic control over Scottish education at a local level. That’s been a longstanding part of Scottish education policy and the Scottish Government has absolutely no intention of taking that power away from local Government.”*

We want the governance review to be a genuine open debate about how best to deliver excellence and equity for ALL children and young people

- The proposal by the parents of St Joseph’s and other proposals for parent led schools raise fundamental questions about how schools are run in Scotland.
- It is right therefore to consider this question in the context of the governance review

QUOTE: Director General of the CBI Carolyn Fairbairn - CBI Scotland’s annual dinner 3 Sep *“On qualifications, Scotland has a proud record. When it comes to the percentage of the workforce holding no qualifications at all, Scotland has the lowest regional average in the whole UK, at just 5%. It shows that education has been a major priority for the Scottish Government. And now Scotland’s Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, is also Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.”*

She continued: *“Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence is leading the way. Combining academic excellence with the attitudes and aptitudes young people need to succeed. Giving young people the chance to pursue vocational qualifications, without being seen as ‘second best’.”*

We will develop proposals for a fair and transparent needs based funding formula for our schools

- If we are to devolve more responsibility to teachers and practitioners, then we need a funding formula that supports their ability to exercise that responsibility effectively.
- In March 2017, we will consult on proposals for a fair funding formula that reflects need and changes arising from the Governance Review, putting teachers, parents and communities in the driving seat of school improvement. The Governance Review offers an early opportunity to share views on the design of the funding formula.

The Education Scotland tackling bureaucracy report makes clear that just under half of all local authorities (15) have been proactive in ensuring bureaucracy and unnecessary workload are addressed effectively.

- But many local authorities need to **speed up progress** in ensuring consistent good practice across schools.
- We are committed to freeing teachers of unnecessary burdens and are already taking steps to reduce teacher workload. **Education Scotland will support further improvement taking account of the best practice identified in this report**
- **The role of HMI and the inspection Charter guarantees the independence, fairness and openness** of the review. HM Inspectors drew on their wealth of experience in evaluation to design the scrutiny activities for the review and they communicated the arrangements to all local authorities before the summer and throughout the review.

The National Improvement Framework will give us the information we need to determine the impact of our work and where we need to do more

- Our **National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education** addresses a key OECD recommendation that Scotland develop an integrated framework for assessment and evaluation that encompasses all levels within our education system.
- The National Improvement Framework will, **for the first time under CfE, provide us with a complete picture of how our children are progressing with their learning**, covering the full stretch of school years.

- We will publish the percentage of children achieving Curriculum for Excellence levels on a local authority by local authority, and school by school basis.
- This information will give the most detailed picture ever of progress across Scotland, as we work to tackle and substantially eliminate the attainment gap

The new standardised assessments will simply replace the existing assessments already used in most schools in Scotland – they will not increase workload for teachers or children.

- New standardised assessments will be taken by all pupils in primary 1, 4 and 7 and secondary 3, apart from in some very particular circumstances, for example, where children have multiple, complex needs. **This decision would be for teachers in conjunction with parents.**
- **Teachers will decide the appropriate time within the school year** for individual pupils to sit the assessments.
- The **assessments will be as short as possible** and will be age and stage appropriate.
- **Assessment is part of everyday learning and teaching.** The intention of all assessment is to assess progress and put in place support where it is needed. Parents, as they do now, should discuss any concerns about their child's learning and assessment with their teacher.
- Procurement and development of the assessments will be **completed by the end of next school year.**
- Responses to the Invitation to Tender have been received. We expect to have a contractor in place by mid-October.
- We **listened to all views** during our many in-depth discussions with parents, teaching unions, academics and education professionals and those views were used to shape the draft National Improvement Framework, including our approach to standardised assessments.

QUOTE: Sue Ellis of Strathclyde University in a blog 6 September: *"The new national Improvement framework is well underway and has all the right elements to make a difference. What makes the NIF potentially ground-breaking is that it captures narratives about experiences alongside quantitative evidence from surveys and externally validated assessments."*

Bill Nicol/DFM

25 Oct 2016

Mountain ^{Working}
- Educ.

James Hattie - teacher as highest common denominator

St Josephs

Ownership of edu c. £ 4200 primary
£ 6400 secondary

cost efficiencies - cost of service delivery?

Al Qulam

Low cost school (£ only £1900 per pupil?)

An other 8 schools (AAP - check which ones? AP?)

14 ex HTS private edu.

Larry Plunagan want meet.

Time taken in SG - changes in staffing

DFM

about adding value to centrality of teaching.

Gov. rev will explore.

Debate - we are part way through.

(DFM will give thought to business plans as part of gov. rev)

* AP - check other stakeholders Bill has spoken to AP

Item 3: Email exchange with SG official and Bill Nicol following meeting with action points.

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 18 April 2017 10:42
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Meeting with John Swinney

[redacted] | Empowering Schools Unit | People and Infrastructure Division | 2A South Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | Tel: [redacted] | Ext: [redacted] | Blackberry: [redacted]

Please note: I work Monday - Thursday

From: [redacted]
Sent: 07 November 2016 12:19
To: Bill Nicol
Subject: RE: Meeting with John Swinney

Hi Bill

Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you, I did get your message first time.

It was very nice to meet you, and hear first-hand about the work that you are doing. No problem on the tea either, it was my pleasure.

I haven't heard anything yet from his Private Office, though I did speak to [redacted] (Mr Swinney's Assistant Private Secretary) after the meeting to check he had noted down what I had. I'll chase them up this week to see if he has progressed anymore in his thinking.

I'll be at the event on Thursday in Glasgow, so we can catch up then. I'll introduce you to [redacted] at that meeting too, and [redacted] if he is attending.

Did you see the press on St Joseph's last week?

[redacted]

[redacted] | Empowering Schools Unit | People and Infrastructure Division | 2A South Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | Tel: [redacted] | Ext: [redacted] | Blackberry: [redacted]

Please note: I work Monday - Thursday

From: Bill Nicol [mailto:[redacted]]
Sent: 27 October 2016 12:35
To: [redacted]
Subject: Meeting with John Swinney

Good afternoon [redacted], I hope that you are well. I just wanted to drop you a quick note to thank you for meeting me the other day and allowing me the opportunity to explain a bit about the work that we have been progressing under the Hometown Foundation banner. Thanks also for the tea! ☺

I enjoyed the discussion with John and it was interesting to hear his thoughts on education reform, first-hand. As far as I understand:

- John will be giving some thought to how the SG respond to the Business Plans and our request for a pilot; and
- I asked John if he could nominate you to work with us to appreciate the finer details of the Business Plans and address any outstanding matters from the SG perspective (FYI - he previously appointed John McNairney, The Chief Planner, to assist us on Owenstown discussions and this was very useful).

I would be keen to meet up with [redacted] at an early date and also [redacted], in due course. How would I best do that?, would I contact them direct or through you? I was good to hear that you came from Ayr and it triggered some fond memories for me, when we used to spend some time there, when I was a teenager, on holiday! ☺

Kind regards
Bill

Bill Nicol
Director, Hometown Foundation
Mechanics Workshop
New Lanark, ML11 9DB

Mobile : [redacted]
Email : [redacted]

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ENGAGEMENT TITLE – MEETING WITH BILL NICOL, HOMETOWN FOUNDATION

Date and Time of Engagement	24 November 2015, 13.00 – 13.30 (30 minutes)
Where	Minister's Room Parliament
Who	This is a 30 minute private meeting between Dr Allan and Bill Nicol.
Key Purpose / Message	This meeting is an opportunity for Bill Nicol to discuss his proposals on co-operative education, supported tuition and mentoring in disadvantaged areas.
Top Facts / Figures	The Scottish Government wants to make Scotland the best place in the world for children to learn. We know that consistent improvement in raising attainment and reducing educational inequity in Scotland is key to improving outcomes for all children and young people.
Sensitivities	It is our view that the state funded independent school that Mr Nicol is referring to his St Joseph's primary School. On the 29 September both you and the First Minister met the St Joseph's Primary parents group (who are seeking to turn St Joseph's into a state funded community school, and have been working with Bill Nicol), at the meeting <u>Ms Sturgeon made it very clear that SG could not assist with preparing the business case for the parents' proposal.</u>
Media Handling	Not required.
Case Studies	Not required.
Stakeholder Support	
Official Support	To be confirmed.

<i>Dress code</i>	Not required.
<i>Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival</i>	Not required.
<i>Specific entrance for Ministerial car/parking arrangements</i>	Not required.

Annex A	Summary of the Meeting and Background on Hometown Foundation
Annex B	Parental Engagement
Annex C	Lines to take on Raising Attainment
Annex D	Education Governance in Scotland and Lines to take

SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF MEETING WITH BILL NICOL

Bill Nicol wrote to Dr Allan on 3 July requesting to meet with her to discuss his work on the Hometown Foundation. He would particularly like to discuss his work in the education sphere, co-operative education, supported tuition, mentoring in disadvantaged areas and a pilot model about state funded independent schools.

It is our view that the state funded independent school that Mr Nicol is referring to is St Joseph's primary School. On the 29 September both you and the First Minister met the St Joseph's Primary parents group (who are seeking to turn St Joseph's into a state funded community school, and have been working with Bill Nicol), at the meeting **Ms Sturgeon made it very clear that SG could not assist with preparing the business case for the parents' proposal.**

We would therefore suggest that the focus of the meeting on hearing about where the **Hometown Foundation is coming from on the Community Empowerment Agenda; and provide a non-committal expressions of interest in innovative ideas and a different model of education.**

Mr Nicol has previously met with Scottish Government officials Donna Bell (Deputy Director Strategy and Performance) and Claire Hicks (Duty Director in the Learning Directorate) to discuss co-operative education. Although they found the meeting useful, they felt that the Hometown Foundation proposals were not in line with the Scottish Government's national policy on education.

The Hometown Foundation are interested in the concept of cooperative communities, where communities have full control of the running their local amenities. Their concept of school education governance and independent schools are similar to that of St Joseph's proposal on establishing a community school. Please refer to **Annex C** on lines to take on our current position and background on education governance in Scotland.

BACKGROUND ON BILL NICOL AND HOMETOWN FOUNDATION

The Hometown Foundation is a Scottish registered charity, which has been formed to enable community development based on co-operative principles. The Foundation's key aim is to enable local communities to become stronger by having much greater control over the things which are most important to them.

To achieve this, the Foundation will provide the means to transfer ownership and power from the state to local communities focused on providing the best possible outcomes in their own areas.

The Hometown Foundation's first project on Owenstown was rejected by South Lanarkshire Council. The foundation proposals focused on building a new town in South Lanarkshire, which will provide eight thousand new homes alongside eight

thousand new jobs. The town will be wholly owned and controlled by its residents via the Owenstown Cooperative Society. Similar projects are presently under consideration in a number of urban areas. More information about Owenstown can be access on - <http://www.owenstown.org/>

Bill Nicol – *Project Director Hometown Foundation, Owenstown*

Bill Nicol BA (Hons) Town and Country Planning, MRTPI, DiP (LE), DiP (BA). Bill was born and brought up in South Lanarkshire. After graduating from Glasgow School of Art in 1984 Bill worked for two Local Authorities, two Local Enterprise Companies, an Economic Development Partnership, two public/private joint venture partnerships and Scottish Enterprise National as Head of Property and Director of the National Waterfront project. Prior to starting work with the Hometown Foundation, Bill was Chief Executive of a pathfinder Urban Regeneration Company.

With great passion, Bill has spent his career working with individuals and communities to help them become more resilient. Bill is also a Trustee of Workshop and Artists' Studio Provision Scotland Ltd and an Ambassador for Ocean Youth Trust Scotland. Bill was formerly an ambassador for the Princes Scottish Youth Business Trust.

PARENTAL/ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The evidence is clear: involved parents and family learning have a significant positive effect on a range of outcomes including attainment, achievement, and health and wellbeing

- If parents are fully involved and playing an active part in their child's learning this adds **value to children's learning experience** – and it gets results.
- The early years home learning environment has been found to remain as a **powerful predictor of better cognitive attainment at age 11 after 6 years in primary school** (EPPE, Sylva et al., 2008).
- Evidence from PISA shows that **fifteen-year-old students whose parents often read books with them during their first year of primary school show markedly higher reading skill scores** than students whose parents read with them infrequently or not at all (2009).

The Scottish Government has laid the foundations for parents to be fully involved in every school and in every community

- The **National Parenting Strategy** highlights the importance of supporting healthy positive attachments between children and their parents. This lays the foundation for children to go on to develop healthy positive relationships with their peers and other adults as they go into early learning and childcare, start school and into young adulthood.
- The **Bookbug** and **PlayTalkRead** campaigns continue to support strong parental engagement in the early years.
- By providing parents with the right to be involved via – the **Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006** and the **School Handbook Regulations (2012)** - landmark laws which established Parent Councils and strengthened the place of parents within our schools.
- The **ongoing development of a web-based resource (engagingwithfamilies.co.uk)** will support educators and parents to access the very latest Scottish, UK and international research evidence to support effective family engagement strategies.
- **Parentzone Scotland**, the website for parents about Scottish education and learning in Scotland, will be continuously refreshed with accessible information. This includes information on learning at home, how parents can become more involved in their child's education, the curriculum, additional support needs, assessment and qualifications, school leaver performance data and advice for parent councils.
- We fund and support the **National Parent Forum of Scotland** to provide a voice on behalf of parents across a wide range of education and early years policy.
- We fund projects to improve parental involvement capacity. Examples include the **SPTC/BEMIS project 'Gathered Together' to improve parental involvement amongst ethnic minority parents** and the **Children in Scotland/Families Need Fathers 'Make Gender Equality Real for children, Fathers and Families'** to support better communication with non-resident parents.
- We will continue to work with local authorities and parent bodies through the **National Parent Involvement Stakeholder Group** and the **national network of parental involvement officers**, reviewing policy, sharing good practice, raising awareness and supporting effective innovation, ensuring parents are represented at national level and stakeholders contribute effectively to policy direction and development.

But we must do more - our vision is for parents to be equal partners in their child's education

- Parents should **expect to be informed but they should also expect to be actively engaged with their early learning and childcare setting or school in their child's learning** – only by working together, sharing ideas and developing them together will parents and educational settings help to eliminate inequity in educational outcomes.
- There are **many reasons why parents might not be engaged** in their child's education and it is important that schools and parents work together to identify what the barriers are and how they can be overcome.
- The **most successful approaches are evidenced based**, take account of the local context, the views of parents/pupils and build upon existing strengths and community assets. The evidence suggests that parental engagement must not be a bolt on; but integrated into the life of early learning and childcare settings and schools.

We are taking steps to ensure that Scotland becomes a world leader in involving parents as genuine and equal partners

- Parental engagement lies at the heart of our strategy to raise attainment and close the equity gap - it is a key driver for improvement within our new **National Improvement Framework** and will continue to feature as a priority in the **Scottish Attainment Challenge, Raising Attainment for All** and Early Years Collaborative programmes.
- The first stage of a refreshed online Parental Involvement toolkit for education practitioners will go live in November. This resource will be developed to provide **links to research, guidance, examples of effective and improving practice, and professional learning activities to support improvement**.
- **Read, Write, Count** – our major new campaign for parents of P1-P3 children – will provide **practical hints and tips, "outreach activity" - supportive, fun sessions with families in our most disadvantaged areas** – and **gift packs to all P1 pupils (starting in 2015) and all P2/P3 pupils (starting 2016)** – more than 230,000 distributed by end of 2016.
- Education Scotland will also continue to **review and enhance the resources and support to education authorities and schools** – this includes the publication of a new CfE briefing for practitioners and other partners 'Parental Involvement and Engagement: Improving Outcomes for All'.

RAISING ATTAINMENT AND CLOSING THE GAP

Lines to take with Bill Nicol

- Our attainment record is good, and is improving. Few children are now leaving school with very low or no levels of qualification. The on-going commitment to Curriculum for Excellence will ensure Scotland maintains and improves its excellent standards in education;
- We are working with stakeholders to take forward innovative approaches, such as the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Raising Attainment for All to further improve the educational outcomes;
- Tackling educational inequality is at the heart of this government's agenda - The **£100m** Attainment Scotland Fund is initially being targeted at LAs and schools with the highest concentration of primary pupils living in households in deprived areas. The Attainment Scotland Fund is currently supporting two programmes:
- **Challenge Authorities** - providing targeted support to **seven local authorities** with the largest concentration of primary-aged pupils living in **deprived areas** – Glasgow, Dundee, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire and North Lanarkshire. The Attainment Scotland Fund is supporting the implementation of the improvement plans these authorities have developed focused on raising attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- **Schools Programme** – working with **57 targeted** primary schools in other areas of Scotland that have significant proportions of their pupils living in deprived areas. These schools are supporting pupils and families from communities which are facing some of the greatest challenges across Scotland. The schools will take a key role in implementing, supporting and spreading practice of what works to raise attainment, ambition and aspirations.

Attainment

The Scottish Government's ambition is for Scotland to be the best place to grow up. To achieve that we need to raise attainment and reduce educational inequity for all of Scotland's children and young people. Attainment is the measurable progress which children and young people make as they advance through and beyond school, and the development of the range of skills, knowledge and attributes needed to succeed in learning, life and work.

The Attainment Gap

The Scottish education system works well for most children and young people, who make good progress in their learning. However, there is still a gap between the progress which is made between those living in Scotland's least and most deprived areas. Many children and young people living in our most deprived communities, do significantly worse at all levels of the education system than those from our least deprived communities.. This is often referred to as the 'attainment gap'.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge

The attainment gap in Scotland is unacceptable. Tackling the attainment gap requires challenging everyone involved in Scottish education to relentlessly focus efforts on reducing the impacts of deprivation on educational outcomes. The First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge in February 2015 to bring a greater sense of urgency and priority to this issue. The work is set firmly within the context of Curriculum for Excellence which aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the attributes, knowledge and skills they will need to flourish in life, learning and work.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge will focus and accelerate targeted improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The Challenge will build on the range of initiatives and programmes already in place to raise attainment and reduce inequity for children across Scotland.

The Challenge has two main components:

Universal support – Universal support – The package of universal support available to all in Scotland will bring together three main components that are designed to fit together to create an integrated approach in order to help local authorities and schools access the information and support they need to narrow the attainment gap.

- **Attainment Advisors** - local Authorities will have direct access to a named Attainment Advisor who will work collaboratively alongside local authority staff on agreed priorities which support the Scottish Attainment Challenge.
- **National Hub** - a virtual centre of educational expertise that will support the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The hub will play a key role in moving knowledge to action around the education system. It will incorporate a range of features to build collaborative learning and engage leaders and practitioners to support a self-improving education system.

£100m Attainment Scotland Fund – a funding initiative over 4 years (2015 – 2019) targeted to supporting pupils in local authorities and schools with the highest concentrations of primary-aged pupils living in deprivation. The focus of the Fund is on primary schools and targeted improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as the foundations for learning. The Attainment Scotland Fund is currently support two programmes:

- **Local authorities** - providing targeted support to local authorities with the largest concentration of primary-aged pupils living in deprived areas – Glasgow, Dundee, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire and North Lanarkshire. The Attainment Scotland Fund is supporting the implementation of the improvement plans these authorities have developed focused on raising attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- **Schools** – working with 57 specific primary schools in other areas of Scotland that have significant proportions of their pupils living in deprived areas. These schools are supporting pupils and families from communities which are facing some of the greatest challenges across Scotland. The schools will take a key role in implementing, supporting and spreading practice of what works to raise attainment, ambition and aspirations.

EDUCATION GOVERNANCE IN SCOTLAND

Local Authority Schools

1. In accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 the provision of education is the responsibility of local authorities. This includes all aspects of education from the school buildings to the delivery of the curriculum. Education is provided at pre-school, primary and secondary levels in both mainstream and special schools. The Scottish Government provide funding to local authorities for the provision of education and the majority of children in Scotland attend local authority schools.

Grant Aided Schools

2. There are 8 grant-aided schools in Scotland, 7 provide specialist education for children with additional support needs and are part funded direct from the Scottish Government with the remainder of funding provided by local authorities who place children in the schools. The 8th school is Jordanhill, a mainstream all through school which as a consequence of history is 100% grant funded by the Scottish Government. Other than discussion with regard to the funding of grant-aided schools the governance of these schools is a matter for the management of each school.

Independent Schools

3. All independent schools are registered and regulated by Scottish Ministers in accordance with section 98 to 10 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. There are 100 independent schools providing education at primary, secondary and all through schools to a round 30,000 pupils. The responsibility for the operation of independent schools rests with individual proprietors. Independent schools do not receive Government funding and are generally financed through parental fees or charitable donations.

Further lines to take on Independent schools:

- It is the responsibility of local authorities, supported by the Scottish Government, to ensure the adequate provision of education services which meet the needs of local communities.
- This approach is consistent with the principle of "access for all" which underpins our education system. It is an approach which recognises:
 - the crucial role that parents and communities play in the life of our schools.
 - that access to a good education should not be limited only to those children who are supported by active and engaged parents and communities.
- It would not be appropriate to revise a policy of this nature based on the situation of a particular school. Instead, any change would need to reflect emerging needs of the system as a whole.

From: [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights
Sent: 03 July 2015 14:04
To: 'Bill Nicol'
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights
Subject: RE: Ref 2015/0018063

Bill,

Many thanks for confirming. Please report to reception on arrival at the Parliament and one of us will come to collect you. Will you be accompanied?

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | **Assistant Private Secretary (Diary) | Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights | Alex Neil MSP**

3F (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ | 3rd Floor, Scottish Parliament

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]



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From: Bill Nicol [mailto:[REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk]
Sent: 03 July 2015 11:55
To: Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Ref 2015/0018063

Good Morning [REDACTED], the 17 September 13:45-14:30 would be best for me.

Kind regards

Bill

From: [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** CabSecSJCPR@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Sent: 01 July 2015 15:41
To: [REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk
Cc: CabSecSJCPR@scotland.gsi.gov.uk; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Ref 2015/0018063

Good afternoon Bill,

Thank you for your email. Mr Neil has availability after the summer recess as follows;

- 10th Sep, 09:00-09:45, or;
- 17th Sep, 13:45-14:30

This meeting would take place in the Scottish Parliament and the timings are subject to parliamentary business. I will hold both dates in the diary for now and would be grateful if you could advise which is suitable.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Assistant Private Secretary (Diary) | Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights | Alex Neil MSP

3F (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ | 3rd Floor, Scottish Parliament

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]



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From: Bill Nicol [mailto:[REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk]

Sent: 30 June 2015 15:53

To: Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights

Subject: Ref 2015/0018063

Good afternoon [REDACTED], I was given your name by [REDACTED], Private Secretary. I have been trying to meet up with Alex Neil since April this year and I understand that he would be happy to have a conversation regarding Owenstown and the Hometown Foundation. It would be great if you could let me know when he is free.

Kind regards

Bill

Bill Nicol
Director, Hometown Foundation
Hometown Education Learning Partnerships
Mechanics Workshop
New Lanark, ML11 9DB

Mobile : [REDACTED]
Email : [REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk

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Tha am post-d seo (agus faidhle neo ceanglan còmhla ris) dhan neach neo luchd-ainmichte a-mhàin. Chan eil e ceadaichte a chleachdadh ann an dòigh sam bith, a' toirt a-steach còraichean, foillseachadh neo sgaoileadh, gun chead. Ma 's e is gun d'fhuair sibh seo le gun fhiosd', bu choir cur às dhan phost-d agus lethbhreac sam bith air an t-siostam agaibh, leig fios chun neach a sgaoil am post-d gun dàil.

Dh'fhaodadh gum bi teachdaireachd sam bith bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba air a chlàradh neo air a sgrùdadh airson dearbhadh gu bheil an siostam ag obair gu h-èifeachdach neo airson adhbhar laghail eile. Dh'fhaodadh nach eil beachdan anns a' phost-d seo co-ionann ri beachdan Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

**BRIEFING NOTE FOR ALEX NEIL, CABINET SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE,
COMMUNITIES AND PENSIONERS' RIGHTS**

MEETING WITH: Bill Nicol, Director of the Hometown Foundation

Date: 17 September 2015

What does this stem from	Bill Nicol sent a maccs request (2015/0018063) to Mr Neil requesting a meeting to discuss Owenstown and the Hometown Foundation.
Key Message	The Minister and Officials cannot comment on, or support or oppose any planning application at any stage. Doing so would prejudice our position were the application to come before us i n the future for decision.
Who	Bill Nicol, Director of the Hometown Fou ndation ([REDACTED])
What	The Foundation are exploring other options for the Owenstown site and suitable alternative sites for the Foundation's proposals.
Why	The Hometown Foundation is a Scottish registered charity, which has been formed to enable community development based on co-operative principles. The Foundation is looking at different ways of delivering its principles, via a range of independent educational opportunities and community enterprise projects throughout the central belt.
Where	T3.23, Parliament
When	13:45-14:30, Thursday 17 September 2 015
Official(s) attending	[REDACTED] Assistant Chief Planner, Pl anning and Architecture Division [[REDACTED]]
Annexes	Annex A: Brief

Owenstown, South Lanarkshire

Issue:

Planning permission in principle for Owenstown was refused at appeal on 20 March 2015. The Foundation are exploring other options for the Owenstown site and suitable alternative sites for the Foundation's proposals.

Lines to take:

There is support for the principles of the Hometown Foundation and we will continue to support them in finding a suitable alternative site.

Proposal:

The proposal, in principle, was for a large mixed use settlement incorporating over 3000 houses and related education and employment facilities within a context of co-operative principles.

Background:

Planning permission was refused by South Lanarkshire Council on 1 April for a large mixed use settlement incorporating over 3000 houses and related education and employment facilities within a context of co-operative principles.

On 30 June 2014, the applicant submitted an appeal to Scottish Ministers (DPEA) against the planning decision. Mr Nicol requested on two occasions that the appeal at Owenstown be recalled (Aug 2014, Feb 2015). It was agreed by Ministers that the proposal on this site did not raise national issues that merited recall.

The main reason for refusal by South Lanarkshire Council was on the grounds that the proposal is significantly contrary to the development plan. The site is agricultural and forestry land detached from main settlements and with little supporting infrastructure. The proposed settlement was not promoted by the developers for inclusion in the LDP (June 2015).

Planning permission in principle for Owenstown was refused at appeal on 20 March 2015. In determining the appeal, the reporter acknowledged that while the proposal had sizeable economic, environmental and socially sustainable characteristics (some of uncertain feasibility), he considered they are heavily outweighed by its unsustainable characteristics. Overall, the reporter concluded the proposal could not be regarded as a sustainable development.

The Chief Planner and various Ministers have previously been involved in discussions with the Hometown Foundation around the suitability of the proposals at Owenstown. However, recognising that the proposals are considered significantly contrary to the development plan, much of the recent focus has been on discussions around suitable alternative sites for the Foundation's proposals. The Foundation's requirements for low cost land acquisition mean that the most appropriate sites in planning terms carry a

greater value than the Foundation have been comfortable with. Current discussion is centred around alternatives elsewhere in Scotland (and separately in England and Ireland) and also about smaller components (community business, nutrition, education, employment, housing regeneration) that might be accommodated separately in the wider community.

While the Scottish Planning Policy recognises that new settlements may occasionally be a necessary part of a spatial strategy, it does not promote particular sites, nor does the recently published National Planning Framework, which does not promote this proposal as a National Development.

The Foundation are exploring other options for the Owenstown site [REDACTED]. The Scottish Government will continue to support the Home Foundation in finding a suitable site.

Planning and Architecture Division

[REDACTED]

From: McNairney J (John)
Sent: 16 June 2014 11:36
To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning; Cabinet Secretary For Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth; Minister for Housing and Welfare; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; Chief Planner; [REDACTED]; Minister for Local Government and Planning; [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: 17:15-18:00 - Follow-up Meeting about Owenstown with Bill Nicol (Project Director, Hometown Foundation)

Steven,

My colleague, [REDACTED] is providing official support from Planning and Architecture division for this meeting with Bill Nicoll tomorrow in my absence from the office. Light briefing has previously been provided and I am e-mailing to add a few comments to that.

I continue to discuss options and sites with Bill Nicoll following the refusal of planning permission for the Owenstown proposal. This has included meeting Scottish Futures Trust with Bill and our property adviser Anthony Andrew. Most recently I have put Bill in touch with the Head of Planning at Scottish Borders Council to explore options for settlement expansion or new settlements linked to the development plan process.

[REDACTED]

The cost of land is a key consideration for the foundation since the intention is that they would look to capture any value from receiving planning permission to then invest in the development. For sites which are allocated within the development plan, value will generally reflect the permission in principle for development and is likely to remain an issue for the foundation. Proposals which are significantly contrary to the development plan will raise fundamental issues about sustainability, use of existing infrastructure and settlement strategy, as has been the case in South Lanarkshire.

My current understanding is that the foundation will look to lodge a planning appeal against the decision of the South Lanarkshire Council to refuse planning permission. That would require to be lodged with Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals by 1 July.

Kind regards

John

John McNairney
Chief Planner

Planning and Architecture Division
2-H-73
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 04 June 2014 16:11

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning; Cabinet Secretary For Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth; Minister for Housing and Welfare; [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED] Chief Planner; [REDACTED] Minister for Local Government and Planning

Subject: RE: 17:15-18:00 - Follow-up Meeting about Owenstown with Bill Nicol (Project Director, Hometown Foundation)

[REDACTED]

Please find attached light briefing on Owenstown for the meeting on 17 June at Parliament. Fiona Simpson will be there in support from Planning & architecture Division.

Should you need more detail, please just let me know.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]



Briefing sheet for
Owenstown M...

-----Original Appointment-----

From: [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

Sent: 04 June 2014 15:09

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: 17:15-18:00 - Follow-up Meeting about Owenstown with Bill Nicol (Project Director, Hometown Foundation)

When: 17 June 2014 17:15-18:00 (UTC) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: TG.20-21, Parliament

[REDACTED]-- to see the request for briefing on Owenstown. I've just spoken to [REDACTED] and he's happy to receive briefing today or tomorrow, so great if you could deal with this.

Fiona is to attend the meeting.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

-----Original Appointment-----

From: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

Sent: 14 May 2014 10:35

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning; 'Michael.Russell.MSP@scottish.parliament.uk'; 'Aileen.Campbell.MSP@scottish.parliament.uk' (Aileen.Campbell.MSP@scottish.parliament.uk); Minister for Children and Young People; Cabinet Secretary For Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth;

'john.swinney.msp@scottish.parliament.uk'; Minister for Housing and Welfare;
Margaret.Burgess.msp@scottish.parliament.uk; McNairney J (John); [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; Minister for Local
Government and Planning; 'Derek.Mackay.msp@scottish.parliament.uk'; Chief Planner; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; 'Margaret.Burgess2@scottish.parliament.uk'
Subject: 17:15-18:00 - Follow-up Meeting about Owenstown with Bill Nicol (Project Director, Hometown Foundation)
When: 17 June 2014 17:15-18:00 (UTC) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.
Where: TG.20-21, Parliament

All, pushing this meeting back by a week to accommodate Mr Swinney's diary.

Thanks

[REDACTED]
19/06/2014

All, I'm just updating this to reflect that Bill Nicol, the developer, will be accompanying Ms Campbell to the meeting.

Thanks

[REDACTED]
15/05/2014

To note the change in meeting room.

[REDACTED]
14/05/2014

<< Message: RE: Owenstown >> << Message: RE: Owenstown >> << File: Briefing Cover sheet briefing sheet for events - February 2013.doc >>
Hi [REDACTED]

As discussed, Ms Campbell has asked for another meeting about Owenstown with Mr Russell and Mr Swinney. I've included Ms Burgess as I believe she attended the last meeting on 5 November 2013.

I would be grateful for official support at the meeting and for briefing on the attached template for all Ministers by 3 June.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Assistant Private Secretary (Diary) | Office of the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning | Scottish Government | 4N.08, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG | Tel: [REDACTED] | cabsecell@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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Please use the link below to view Mr Russell's preferences
<http://intranet/InExec/AboutUs/Ministers/MinisterialPrivateOffices/educationlifelonglearning/cabseceducation/Introcabseceducation>

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<< OLE Object: Picture (Device Independent Bitmap) >>

ENGAGEMENT TITLE -

Date and Time of Engagement	17 June 2014, 17:15-18:00
Where	TG.20-21, Parliament
Key Message	<p>Planning permission was refused on 1 April for a large mixed use settlement, called Owenstown.</p> <p>The applicant has a right of appeal (up to 3 months from the refusal date) to Scottish Ministers against the planning decision. Scottish Ministers cannot comment on the merits or otherwise of any planning proposal that could come before them.</p> <p>The Scottish Government continues to support the developer in finding an alternative suitable site to be based on the principles of Robert Owen.</p>
What	Ms Campbell has asked for another meeting to discuss the Owenstown proposal with Mr Russell and Mr Swinney. (Ms Burgess has also been invited as she attended the last meeting which was held on 5 Nov 2013).
Who	Aileen Campbell and Mr Bill Nicol, Project Director for the Hometown Foundation.
Why	The Scottish Government continues to support the Home Foundation in finding a suitable site. The meeting is to discuss matters in more detail.
Supporting official	[REDACTED] Assistant Chief Planner. Mobile: [REDACTED] Office Contact Number: [REDACTED]
Briefing contents	Annex A: Key issues.
Media Handling	N/A
Dress code	N/A
Greeting Party and specific meeting point on arrival (if event is at a non SE Building)	N/A
Specific entrance for Ministerial car/parking arrangements	N/A

Annex A

Follow up meeting about Owenstown with Aileen Campbell MSP and Bill Nicol (Project Director, Hometown Foundation.) 17 June 2014.

Key Issues

- Planning permission was refused by South Lanarkshire Council on 1 April for a large mixed use settlement, called Owenstown. The settlement was to be based on the principles of Robert Owen, a Welsh social Reformer, founder of the Co-operative movement and Mill Manager and part owner in Lanarkshire. The settlement would have incorporated education, employment and residential development taking place within a context of sustainability and co-operative principles. The proposed site was not allocated for development within the proposed LDP.
- The applicant has a right of appeal to Scottish Ministers (time limit for appeal is 3 months from the refusal date of 1 April) against the planning decision. Scottish Ministers cannot comment on the merits or otherwise of any planning proposal that could come before them.
- The main reason for refusal was on the grounds that the proposal is significantly contrary to the local development plan which is currently under examination by Scottish Ministers through the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA).
- The Scottish Government continues to support the developer in finding a suitable site.

Progress since last meeting on 5 Nov 2013

- Since the last meeting on 5 Nov 2013, John McNairney (Chief Planner) has maintained regular contact with Bill Nicol, Project Manager of the Hometown Foundation, about the prospect of an alternative site being promoted which might gain the support of the Planning Authority, most likely through the development plan process.
- John McNairney has visited key sites with Mr Nicol and met with the Head of Planning in November and again in January 2014. Only one site in the locality, incorporating the former Winston Barracks, had strong potential in planning terms and also in meeting key requirements to the Foundation but the Foundation ruled this out given complex and costly land acquisition. Other sites were not suited to the Foundation either because of location (Coalburn or Dalquhandy) or ground conditions (around Law Hospital).
- Discussion in Jan 2014 included the prospect of a smaller development at the proposed Owenstown site incorporating some of the current community business ventures underway, but that has been rejected by the Trustees in discussion with Mr Nicol, hence a current letter to the Council seeking to bring

the then current application process to a close, which was subsequently refused on 1 April 2014.

- Over the period since November there has been strong media interest in the Owenstown proposal as a Garden City concept and most recently in connection with the Wolfson Economics Award.
- John McNairney has also offered to support the Foundation in finding a site further afield, possibly in discussion with Scottish Futures Trust. Whilst Mr Nicol is happy to progress that, we are conscious that the Foundation has also been promoting the Owenstown model south of the border and in Ireland where he is hopeful a suitable site might be found.

Next Steps

- The Scottish Government will continue to support the Home Foundation (if they want us to) in finding a suitable site.

