

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

LEARNING ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

JOINT REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (LEARNING, POLICY AND RESOURCES) AND HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update Council Executive on the outcomes of the council's submission for proposed projects for inclusion in Phase Two of the Learning Estate Investment Programme funding programme, and to outline feasibility work on the identified priority (schools for the future) projects which were not successful in the bid and to provide an update on the progress of developing the new Learning Estate Strategy (LES) and Learning Estate Management Plan (LEMP).

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Notes the confirmed inclusion of East Calder Primary School as part of Phase Two of the Learning Estate Investment Programme with Deans, Eastertoun and St Joseph's Primary Schools not being included;
2. Approves the undertaking of further feasibility assessments and appraisals for alternative investment proposals at Deans, Eastertoun, and St Joseph's Primary Schools, and the associated budgets, as set out in this report;
3. Notes that updates will be provided, on the outcome of the feasibility assessments and appraisals at Deans, Eastertoun and St Josephs;
4. Notes the initial assessment outcomes for Riverside and Letham Primary Schools which were previously identified as emerging priority projects and agrees to progress with detailed options appraisals and business case development for their replacement; and
5. Notes the progress, proposed timescales and governance arrangements for the Learning Estate Strategy (LES) and Learning Estates Management Plan (LEMP).

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality	Integrated Impact Assessments have been undertaken for each of the investment projects and these are included within Appendix 4 for information.

Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)

III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Investment would deliver improved condition, suitability, accessibility and sustainability at the relevant schools. Modern fit for purpose learning environments enable pupils to achieve their full potential and support the effective delivery of learning.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Outcomes positively supported include: Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed; we are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities; people most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances; we make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Within the General Services Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2027/28 budgets totalling £14.36m is allocated for phase 2 Learning Estate Investment Projects.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII	Other consultations	Consultation is undertaken with stakeholders when developing and delivering school projects, including Statutory Education Consultations as required.

D TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

West Lothian Council is recognised as having one of the best performing learning estates in Scotland with all schools in satisfactory or better condition. To sustain the level of performance, significant resources will need to be deployed and the council continues to prioritise investment in the learning estate as a key priority. In addition to its own resources, the council has previously been successful in securing funding under the Scotland's Schools for the Future Programme which supported the delivery of a new Uphall Station and Pumpherston Primary School; the award winning new West Calder High School and a hall extension and modernisation of Toronto Primary, Livingston. These projects required varying levels of match funding by the council.

As part of the General Services Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2027/28 approved in February 2018 and, in advance of any Scottish Government announcement of a new Schools for the Future investment programme, potential projects were identified based on condition, suitability, sufficiency, sustainability, accessibility, whole life costs and wider regeneration benefits, with initial match funding budgets agreed. These included Deans Primary, Livingston (£3.5m); Eastertoun Primary, Armadale (£4m), East Calder Primary (£3.5m) and Beatlie Additional Support Needs (ASN) School, Livingston (£4m). The budget requirements were based on the previous programme requirements, funding awards and the estimated costs of the projects.

The council was successful in securing inclusion of a new Beatlie ASN School as one of the initial eleven pilot projects within phase one of the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP), which has replaced the Schools for the Future Programme. Officers are progressing the project and design development, funding model evaluation, site investigations and cost appraisals are ongoing. Progress on the project will be reported upon separately as key milestones are achieved and consideration by Council Executive is required.

Following discussions with the Scottish Futures Trust in early 2020, the council was advised that a further phase (phase two) of funding would be available with funding submission proposals and confirmation of acceptance expected towards the end of 2020. Further feasibility and project appraisals were undertaken on the four remaining projects (Deans, Eastertoun, East Calder and St Josephs, Whitburn).

D2 Learning Estate Investment Programme

Council Executive on 6 October 2020 approved the submission of four previously identified priority projects for inclusion as part of Phase two of the LEIP (namely Deans, Eastertoun, East Calder and St Joseph's, Whitburn Primary Schools).

On 13 October 2020 council officers prepared and submitted the approved priority projects for consideration by the Scottish Government for inclusion in Phase Two of the LEIP .

In December 2020 it was announced by Scottish Government that East Calder was accepted, to be supported, as one of 25 projects under the £800 million Phase Two of the programme. A full list of the supported projects in Scotland is included in appendix 1. Deans, Eastertoun and St Joseph's were not included as part of the programme.

The funding award is revenue based and linked to performance measures which reflect the priorities of the programme. These not only include usual conditions such as ensuring operational availability by December 2025 and meeting metrics on construction costs but also provision of digital infrastructure, delivering economic benefits and meeting energy efficiency targets. Officers are confident that criteria can be met and that the full revenue funding award over 30 years can be achieved.

D3 Priority Projects

As replacement schools for Deans, Eastertoun and St Joseph's, Whitburn have not been supported by the Scottish Government, it is proposed that comprehensive feasibility and option appraisals will commence during 2021 to develop a programme of planned improvements to the existing schools.

All schools are currently in satisfactory condition, however elements that have been identified as poor, or likely to become poor in the near future will require attention. The investment would seek to align with the council's objectives of all schools being in satisfactory or better condition, suitability and accessibility. It is intended to incorporate revised budgets in the General Services capital programme to be reported in February 2021, reflecting a proposed programme of planned improvements.

D3.1 Deans Primary School

The progressing of a refurbishment for Deans primary school will support the wider regeneration of Deans South and act as a catalyst for community building potential. Works include planned improvements to extend asset life and also elevational treatments to compliment the design aesthetics of new housing proposed to be developed opposite the school as part of the wider regeneration of the area. It is proposed that a new more prominent access and entrance will be created including potential opportunities for a new entrance to the school site from Deans South. It is proposed that a revised budget £2 million is established to support the project.

D3.2 Eastertoun Primary School

The entrance to the school is via a private road (Manse Avenue) which is narrow and makes access difficult for larger vehicles. (deliveries, emergency or construction traffic etc). In the absence of funding for a new school on an alternative site, it is proposed that feasibility and appraisal work is undertaken to sustain and improve the condition, suitability and the accessibility of the school. Works proposed will include improving learning environments for pupils with, where possible, the introduction of collaborative learning plazas and break out areas, enhanced use of digital technology (interactive learning screens / smart boards) and improvements to lighting and ventilation.

Appraisal work on improving access will evaluate a range of options and will be reported upon when completed. It is proposed that a revised budget of £1.5 million is established to support the project.

In addition, to the proposed investment outlined, works are being undertaken to renovate the existing school kitchen as part of the Schools Summer Programme in 2021 at a cost of approximately £330,000.

The securing of funding from developer contributions is unlikely to be significant (if any) for the foreseeable future given there is currently sufficient school roll capacity for primary education across the Armadale area. Should this change then funding will be focused on increasing capacity and ancillary improvements and will complement the investment proposed.

D3.3 St Joseph's Whitburn

The planned maintenance and improvement requirements of St Joseph's to sustain condition and improve the asset life of the school identifies key areas for investment including the external fabric, toilets and heating. Proposals for investment would include these, together with roof and external envelop upgrade (insulated) ,to improve energy efficiency. A proposed revised budget £1.5 million is estimated to undertake the works.

D4 Emerging Potential Investment - Riverside and Letham

As reported previously, following completion of programmed surveys issues were identified with the long-term condition of parts of the roof at Riverside Primary School. Whilst currently safe as a consequence of revised technical guidance relating to the type of roof present (Siporex - a type of light flat reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete roofs extensively used from the 1950's to the 1980's), it was considered prudent to undertake additional reinforcement works and to undertake monthly monitoring.

As part of further investigations on the capacity of the school and recognising the affected areas it has been possible to progress demolition works of part of the affected area and this will be carried out during summer 2021.

Following these surveys and reflecting on the wider construction quality sustaining Riverside in a satisfactory condition and retaining existing suitability is possible over the short term within current maintenance and planned improvement programmes. However, significant longer term investment will be required.

A separate assessment of Letham Primary School has also been undertaken. Whilst this is also satisfactory in terms of condition, it will similarly require significant investment over the medium term to sustain and improve its asset life and the quality of teaching environment it provides.

Both Riverside and Letham have been identified as requiring significant investment over the next three to five years or there is a risk of them becoming rated as poor. Initial feasibility work has commenced and identified that, given the level of investment required for both schools over the short, medium and longer term, that replacement may be more economical and enable the provision of modern learning environments.

A detailed options appraisal and strategic business case is now proposed to be developed for both Riverside and Letham Primary Schools, with the outcomes to be reported separately to Council Executive for consideration.

D5 Learning Estate Strategy and Learning Estate Management Plan

Officers are currently progressing the development of the Learning Estate Strategy (LES) 2021/22 to 2032/33 which will outline the council's long-term vision and approach to ensuring safe, well maintained and suitable school environments that are innovative and adaptive to support the modern curriculum and improving attainment. It was considered prudent to await the outcome of the Scottish Governments announcement of the second phase of the Learning Estate Investment Programme given the potential impact on several schools and the level of investment identified. It is therefore now proposed to report the LES to Education PDSP on 2 March 2021 and then to Education Executive.

The LES provides the strategic framework and structure for the Learning Estate Management Plan (LEMP) 2021/22 to 2027/28 which sets out in more detail a programme of actions to deliver the strategies aims and objectives. These will include the approaches to be adopted to sustain and improve performance measures such as statutory compliance, condition, suitability, sustainability, sufficiency and accessibility and will outline key investment programmes including, where appropriate, specific projects relating to individual schools.

It is proposed that the LEMP will be reported to Education PDSP on 2 March 2021 and then Council Executive. Annual updates on the LEMP will be provided to Education PDSP.

D6 Further Updates

It is proposed that regular updates on the progress of the Learning Estate Investment projects identified within the report will be provided to Council Executive as part of reporting on the delivery of the General Services Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2027/28. Separate reports will be provided where there are material matters or determination by Council Executive is required on specific project matters such as key milestones and seeking approvals as necessary.

E. CONCLUSION

The council is committed to investing in our learning estate to improve performance and to enhance teaching environments for our pupils and staff. The inclusion of East Calder Primary School in the Learning Estate Investment Programme, highlights this commitment to the education estate. The Scottish Government decision does mean that replacement of the the other schools identified for investment will not be supported. It is unlikely that a further phase of funding will be announced for some time and therefore it is appropriate for the council to progress with alternative investment proposals for these schools.

Resources to sustain and improve the performance and asset life of the schools which will not be replaced have been estimated and are outlined in the report. These are significant and represent viable alternative investment propositions to meet performance requirements. It is proposed these budgets are included in the capital programme to be reported to Council in February 2021. Detailed feasibility and appraisals will be progressed for these and initial phases of physical works will commence in 2022. Regular updates will be provided as these are progressed.

Riverside and Letham Primary Schools have been identified as emerging priorities for investment due to elements within their construction having limited life and their overall long-term investment needs. It is proposed that detailed appraisals and business case development will be progressed on their replacement.

The new Learning Estate Strategy 2021/22 to 2032/33 and Learning Estate Management Plan 2021/22 to 2027/28 will outline the councils aims and objectives for its learning estate and the actions that will be undertaken to sustain and where possible improve performance. These will be reported upon separately.

As noted in the report, regular updates will be provided as projects progress and where consideration by Council Executive is necessary.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Learning Estate Investment Programme Update - Council Executive 6 October 2020

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 - Proposed Site Plan and General Arrangement drawings

Contact Person:

Neil McIntyre, Capital Programme and Projects Principal

Tel: 01506 281120, e-mail: neil.mcintyre@westlothian.gov.uk

Paul Kettrick, Corporate Estates Manager

Tel: 01506 281826, e-mail: kettrick.paul@westlothian.gov.uk

James Cameron, Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources)

Donald Forrest, Head of Finance and Property Services

Date of meeting: 9 February 2021

Appendix 1 Phase Two Learning Estate Investment Programme – Nationally Supported Projects

1. Angus Council - Monifieth High School
2. City of Edinburgh Council - Liberton High School
3. City of Edinburgh Council - Wester Hailes Education Centre
4. Dumfries and Galloway Council - Dumfries High School
5. Dundee City Council – Proposed new campus to replace Braeview Academy and Craigie High School.
6. East Ayrshire Council - Doon Valley Community Campus
7. East Ayrshire Council - St Sophia's Primary School
8. Fife Council - Inverkeithing High School
9. Glasgow City Council - Gaelic Primary School
10. Glasgow City Council - New City Centre Primary School
11. Highland Council - Broadford Primary School
12. Highland Council - Nairn Academy
13. Midlothian Council - Penicuik High School
14. Midlothian Council - Mayfield Primary School Campus
15. Moray Council - Findrassie Primary School
16. North Ayrshire Council - Montgomerie Park Primary School
17. Perth and Kinross Council - Perth High School
18. Perth and Kinross Council - Primary School(North Perth)
19. Renfrewshire Council - Paisley Grammar Community Campus
20. Scottish Borders Council - Galashiels Academy
21. Scottish Borders Council - Peebles High School
22. South Lanarkshire Council - Newton Farm Primary School extension
23. Stirling Council - Callander Primary School
24. West Dunbartonshire Council - Faifley Campus
25. West Lothian Council - East Calder Primary School