

# SCHOOL ESTATE REVIEW SECONDARY SCHOOLS REVIEW – GALASHIELS, HAWICK, PEEBLES AND SELKIRK

Report by Director of Children and Young People's Services

#### SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

# 26 April 2018

#### 1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Elected Members with:-
  - (a) A summary of the assessment process that has been undertaken regarding the condition, suitability and capacity of each of the secondary schools in Galashiels, Hawick, Peebles and Selkirk.
  - (b) A summary of the engagement that Council officers have undertaken with pupils, staff, parents, Parent Councils and the community in each of the school clusters regarding the future vision for learning provision in each of the areas.
  - (c) Recommendations regarding the creation of a Secondary School Individualised Strategic Plan regarding the future of each of these schools.
- 1.2 The proposed Secondary School Individualised Strategic Plans would contribute significantly to the vision and priorities set out in the Council's Connected Borders Strategic Plan. The secondary school strategy has the opportunity to contribute to: connected communities, eg improved opportunities for learning; enterprising communities, eg workforce; communities of well-being, eg opportunities for intergenerational learning; communities of caring, eg a place where communities can come together to support families.

#### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that Scottish Borders Council:-
  - (a) Approves the creation of a Secondary School Individualised Strategic Plan regarding the schools in Galashiels, Hawick, Peebles and Selkirk; which will enable Council officers to

develop a bespoke strategy for each of these schools in line with the principles of the School Estate Review and the pillars of the Christie Commission, with an update report brought back to the Scottish Borders Council Committee in October 2018.

#### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 7 November 2017 the Executive Committee approved a number of recommendations set out in the paper School Estate Review Next Steps 2017/18. This included approval to carry out a detailed assessment of the four secondary schools that have not been rebuilt (Galashiels Academy, Hawick High School, Peebles High School and Selkirk High School) regarding their condition, suitability and capacity. These assessments were to provide a platform for the strategies to be developed through the review process for each school.
- 3.2 At this time the Executive also approved a change to the guiding principles of the School Estate Review. These principles would shape the proposed strategies for each school:
  - (a) Increased educational and learning opportunities for all generations within the community;
  - (b) Improved outcomes for the community;
  - (c) Sustainability;
  - (d) A future proofed community learning estate;
  - (e) Affordability.
- 3.3 Any proposal made regarding the four secondary schools will also encompass the four pillars of the Christie Commission:-
  - (a) **Partnership** Developing local partnership and collaboration, bringing public, third and private sector partners together with communities to deliver shared outcomes that really matter to people.
  - (b) **People** Unlocking the full creativity and potential of people at all levels of public service, empowering them to work together in innovative ways. Help the creation of ways for people and communities to co-produce services around their skills and networks.
  - (c) **Performance** Demonstrating a sharp focus on continuous improvement of the National Outcomes, applying reliable improvement methods to ensure that services are consistently well designed, based on the best evidence and are delivered by the right people to the right people at the right time.
  - (d) **Prevention** Reducing future demand by preventing problems arising or intervening early. Promoting a bias towards prevention, helping people understand why this is the right thing to do, the choices it implies as well as the benefits it can bring.
- 3.4 All investment models for the Secondary School Estate are delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government has established the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) to help Councils take forward infrastructure projects. SFT operates at arm's length from the Scottish Government and works with every Local Authority across Scotland to drive

forward the Scottish Government's Schools for the Future programme. SFT's role is to efficiently and effectively manage the programme to help Local Authorities achieve the very best value-for-money for their investment in new schools.

3.5 The Scottish Government have not yet announced the latest education investment plan, which will include future funding for the Schools for the Future programme. In February 2018, John Swinney Deputy First Minister advised that a detailed plan would be announced later this year. In order to ensure that Scottish Borders Council is in a position to respond to this announcement, the Service Directors are maintaining regular dialogue with SFT and Scottish Government officers regarding our School Estate programme. In seeking to progress an Individualised Strategic Plan for each of the secondary schools, Scottish Borders Council aims to be in a position to bid for investment funding when the Government announcements are made.

#### 4 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- 4.1 Changes to the School Estate are subject to the School (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (the Act). The Act lays down specific protocols and requirements in relation to the consultation process and engagement with local communities. The Statutory Guidance for the Act confirms that preconsultation engagement forms an important part of the consultation process. While the pre-consultation process is not prescribed in the Act, it requires that Councils determine the approach they wish to adopt and consider carefully how to engage constructively with communities in advance of a statutory consultation.
- 4.2 In the event that a Council does not comply in full with the Act and the accompanying Statutory Guidance, the integrity of the Statutory Consultation process can be undermined and open to challenge. In the event of a school closure proposal, the Scottish Government will scrutinise every aspect of the consultation process and if they identify that a Council has failed to comply with the Act, or has failed to take account of a material consideration, they may call in the proposal for review. This could ultimately result in Ministerial consent to the proposal being withheld and the Council being unable to commence a further consultation regarding the school for a minimum period of five years.
- 4.3 Taking cognisance of the importance of the pre-consultation phase, Council officers sought to design a process which was robust and fair. In this instance, as the Council was assessing investment opportunities for four schools and the resultant implications on each community, it was therefore essential that each community was given the same engagement opportunities and that all information was assessed on the same basis. Best practice dictated that the Council provided all information and evidence required to inform the community in this pre-consultation process to ensure equal opportunity and the integrity of all information.

- 4.4 A community engagement process was designed to comprise:
  - (a) Walk rounds by Council officers of each site with the Senior Management Team of each school and representatives of the Secondary School Parent Council;
  - (b) Presentations by Council officers to each Secondary School Parent Council;
  - (c) Meetings with Headteachers and Secondary School Parent Councils; and
  - (d) Community engagement workshops at each secondary school.
  - (e) The Portfolio Holder was a key participant in every stage of the engagement process. Local Members attended the community workshops.
- 4.5 The community engagement workshops were arranged at each secondary school to allow pupils, staff and community members the opportunity to:
  - (a) Consider information regarding the current school building: suitability, condition and capacity;
  - (b) View architect's concepts of new learning provision;
  - (c) Meet with representatives of the Parent Councils to discuss their views and visions for the future of learning provision in the community;
  - (d) See/hear pupils' views of the current schools and their ideas and visions regarding the future learning provision in their community;
  - (e) Discuss the information and comments with Council officers; and
  - (f) Provide feedback, share ideas, make comments and ask questions.
- 4.6 The workshops were communicated to the public through press releases issued on 21 February to all local media, Scottish Borders Councillors, MPs and MSPs. Both ITV Borders and Radio Borders covered the story. A news story was published on the Scottish Borders Council website and was publicised through social media on 21 February, with two further social media pushes one for each event and one of the day of the event. Letters were also issued to every parent of school aged children in each of the clusters with "Groupcall" text reminders before and after each event.
- 4.7 An on-line engagement form was created to capture opinions, comments and ideas. Paper copies were available at the engagement events. Responses were also asked for in writing, by e-mail or by phone. All responses will be used as part of next steps and key themes have been compiled within a summative document (Appendix 1).

4.8 There have been considerable challenges ensuring adherence to this engagement process as some stakeholders wished to promote a particular viewpoint and/or use the workshop to present specific views and concerns regarding potential changes to the school estate. The Workshops were designed to capture as many views and ideas as possible from across the school and wider community, rather than debate the merits of a specific proposal at this stage. The questions were kept open ended rather than follow the statutory consultation approach which asks questions relating to specific proposals, eq whether there should be a new school or refurbishment. The aim of the workshop was to provide a platform for the sharing of robust information which would then facilitate informed debate and the generation of ideas regarding the future provision of learning in each cluster. Unfortunately in one school community there were inherent concerns about Council consultation processes, based upon historic experiences within the community, and there was also a view within a core group of stakeholders that the National Schools for the Future Programme is not achieving positive outcomes. There were clearly some tensions within some community stakeholder groups which did not evidence the level of community cohesion or joint vision required to proceed to a statutory consultation process. However, it has to be noted that in the Galashiels cluster and the Hawick cluster there were very clear cohesive views that signposted readiness for 'further conceptual work' and 'readiness for detailed consultation' on future plans. In the Selkirk cluster and Peebles cluster further informal consultation work is required to bring together stakeholders in partnership with the Council to explore some of the tensions and provide more detailed information in response to concerns or enquiries in order to arrive at a more unified vision and concept for future education provision in these clusters. Officers will continue to work within each cluster to continue to build engagement and address next steps.

#### 5 ASSESSMENT OF CONDITION

5.1 A detailed assessment of the condition of each of the secondary schools was carried out by Scottish Borders Council surveyors. The surveys were carried out in accordance with Scottish Government guidance, which requires the building condition to be assessed on a five yearly basis. The guidance details how condition should be assessed and stipulates weighting that should be applied to each element to give overall scores:

A: Good	Performing well and operating effectively (physical element carries out function totally as new)
B: Satisfactory	Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration
	(physical element carries out function satisfactorily, may show
	signs of age)
C: Poor	Showing major defects and/or not operating adequately
	(physical element does not carry out function effectively
	without continuous repair, show signs of age)
D: Bad	Economic life expired and/or risk of failure

5.2 The most recent surveys were carried out in 2016 and 2017 for each of the schools. While the condition varies widely across each of the properties, there are elements in each school which are materially better or worse than other parts of the school, e.g. elements of Galashiels and Hawick are

D rating whereas Peebles has A rated sport facilities following investment in the last 5 years. Based on the Government guidance, the overall Condition Assessment for each school is:

	Overall Condition
Galashiels Academy	С
Hawick High School	С
Peebles High School	В
Selkirk High School	С

#### **6** ASSESSMENT OF SUITABILITY

6.1 A detailed assessment of the suitability of each of the secondary schools was carried out by Turner & Townsend early in 2018. This was carried out in accordance with Scottish Government guidance. This guidance details how suitability should be assessed and stipulates the weighting that should be applied to each element to give overall scores:

A: Good	Performing well and operating effectively (the school buildings and grounds support the delivery of services to children and communities)
B: Satisfactory	Performing well but with minor problems (the school buildings and grounds generally support the delivery of services to children and communities)
C: Poor	Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally (the school buildings and grounds impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school)
D: Bad	Does not support the delivery of services to children and communities (the school buildings and grounds seriously impede the delivery of activities that are needed for children and communities in the school)

6.2 The overall suitability of each school is:

	Overall Suitability
<b>Galashiels Academy</b>	С
Hawick High School	С
Peebles High School	В
Selkirk High School	В

6.3 Each of the schools has elements that are good/satisfactory but also elements of poor/bad. Across the four schools, issues have been highlighted regarding accessibility and safety and security, which will be improved and addressed through the annual school estate block allocation programme.

# 7 ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITY

7.1 We have assessed the capacity of each of the schools basing this assessment on the current roll of each secondary school and cluster primary schools:

	Capacity- number of pupils could attend	Pupil roll – school session 2017/2018	Current capacity - %
<b>Galashiels Academy</b>	1,217	825	68%
Hawick High School	1,339	852	64%
Peebles High School	1,450	1240	86%
Selkirk High School	729	385	53%

7.2 There are no pressures projected on Galashiels Academy, Hawick High School or Selkirk High School with occupancy not projected (based on current cluster primary school rolls) to exceed the following capacities over the next four years:

	Projected Capacity
Galashiels Academy	75%
Hawick High School	70%
Selkirk High School	60%

7.3 In Peebles, however, the school roll is currently the largest it has been over the last 20 years. Based on the current primary school rolls within the cluster, occupancy is projected to sit between 90% and 95% in the next four years; therefore it is likely that measures to address roll increases will be required. It also has to be noted that these figures do not take into account any current or future house building in the cluster. Further work is ongoing to ensure these projections are as accurate as possible.

#### 8. NATIONAL CONTEXT

8.1 To compare where Scottish Borders schools sit in the National context, the Council has compared the ratings above with the latest information published last month by the Scottish Government indicating the position as at 1 April 2017:

# 8.2 **Condition -**

- a) 83% of secondary schools in Scotland were rated either as A or B.
- b) 4 Councils have 100% of their secondary schools rated as A schools (Falkirk (8), Inverclyde (6), South Lanarkshire (17) and Stirling (7).
- c) 59 schools were rated as C.
- d) 2 schools were rated as D Midlothian and Moray.
- e) At the time of the data release Scottish Borders Council had 5 C rated secondary schools, which was 55% of its secondary schools.

- f) At this time Scottish Borders had the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest percentage of C rated schools Moray 63% and South Ayrshire 63%.
- g) Only 3 Councils had more C rated schools that Scottish Borders Highland (12), Fife (7) and Dumfries and Galloway (6).
- h) Since this data release Scottish Borders Council has opened Kelso High School and works have commenced at Jedburgh.

## 8.3 Suitability -

- a) 81% of secondary schools were rated either A or B.
- b) 4 Councils have 100% of their secondary schools rated as A Clackmannanshire (3), Inverclyde (6), South Lanarkshire (17) and Stirling (7).
- c) At the time of the data release Scottish Borders reported 1 C rated school; however the recent assessment has shown there are currently 2 C rated schools.
- d) There were 64 (18%) C rated schools across Scotland at this time.
- e) 6 schools were rated as D.
- 8.4 Overall, the current 2018 position would be that two of the Council's schools (Galashiels Academy and Hawick High School) are C graded, i.e. 22%. It should be noted that the Council has made significant progress in recent years in improving the school estate.
- 8.5 The block allocation will address key upgrade issues identified by this current assessment process.

#### 9 ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY

- 9.1 The Workshops were well attended by a wide range of people across the communities. The Workshops did stimulate a high level of engagement and debate. It was a particularly effective method for the pupils to share their views and comments about the present and the future. The pupils have to be commended upon their contribution and positive engagement. The quality of their engagement, their ideas and the sensitivity displayed throughout was impressive across all school communities and is to be commended.
- 9.2 Details of each engagement session and the comments and themes that arose at each event are attached in Appendix 1. The events were held as follows:

		Number of Attendees	
	Date	Pupils	Staff/Parents/ Community
<b>Galashiels Academy</b>	13/3/2018	382	82
Hawick High School	20/3/2018	514	69

Peebles High School	21/3/2018	370	234
Selkirk High School	26/3/2018	390	80

#### 10 RESPONSE FORMS

- 10.1 An on-line Response Form was created on the Citizen Space platform. The details of website page and links were reported through the press release, social media and Groupcall. Lap tops were available at each engagement event to enable completion of the form and hard copies and details of the link were circulated.
- 10.2 In the period from 18 March to 16 April the Council received in excess of 510 completed forms. These comprised the following:-

Total On-lir	
	Responses
Galashiels Academy	84
Hawick High School	92
Peebles High School	288
Selkirk High School	47

- 10.3 A further 385 forms have also just been received from pupils at Peebles High School. These will now be analysed in full and will be considered as part of the next stage of the proposed Strategic Plan process.
- 10.4 Several themes can be identified across the responses for each school cluster and these are summarised in Appendix 1. The common theme across the four school clusters is that pupils, staff and the community wish there to be positive changes and improvements to both learning opportunities and the learning experience.

#### 11 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 It is the ambition of Children and Young People's Services that all four of these secondary school learning environments are replaced or substantially improved at the earliest possible opportunity. Ideally this timeframe would not stretch beyond 15 years. This aim is to ensure that the secondary school provision across the region is not only graded A for condition and suitability, but will also provide the learning opportunities and experience that young people require to reach their full potential in the Scottish Borders.
- 11.2 It is therefore recommended that a Secondary School Individualised Strategic Plan is created for all the schools to ensure that Scottish Borders Council is in a position to maximise its funding opportunities in line with the Scottish Government's investment programme.
- 11.3 While the assessments of Condition, Suitability and Capacity form part of the School Review process, the guiding principles of the School Estate Review and the 4 pillars of the Christie Commission are key considerations

in this process. These principles will shape the individualised plans for each secondary school as the Council seeks to ensure that the learning provision in each school cluster:

- a) Is a well-designed, accessible, inclusive learning environment for all the community that will drive new thinking and change;
- b) Is an integral part of the community it serves;
- Accommodates and provides a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to health and wellbeing and will sustain economic growth and bring strength and vibrancy to communities;
- d) Is sustainable with design, construction and operation that is environmentally and energy efficient;
- e) Is efficiently run and delivers value for money;
- f) Is flexible and responsive to changes in demand for school places and evolved in consultation with learners, staff, parents and the community.
- 11.4 After assessing all the information gathered through the workshops, the on-line response forms and the assessments of the condition, suitability and capacity of each school, it is clear that bespoke solutions are required for each provision:
  - a) In Galashiels and Hawick there is strong appetite for a new school and for improved opportunities and experiences. However, further work is required regarding deliverable concepts and an assessment of all possible options. Work will take place to identify all potential stakeholders across the public, third and private sectors to fully involve partners in the creation of an Individualised Strategic Plan for a community learning concept for each cluster. Considering the context of possible future funding announcements by the Scottish Government in 2018 and the overall C assessment of each school, this work needs to progress at a pace and will include ongoing discussions with Scottish Government partners. These two projects will go forward as a priority to the next stage of design and be brought back to Council to report progress in October. It is important to note that partnership funding is essential to any secondary school community learning project of this magnitude and the key to success in obtaining funding is very much arriving at an innovative design for the future with full community support and evidence that the new concept will transform outcomes for young people, their families and the whole community.
  - b) In Peebles while over 90% of respondents indicated that they considered that a new school is required to (1) accommodate the projected growth in school roll; (2) provide both the learning opportunities and experiences required in 21<sup>st</sup> century; and (3) deal with the safety and security and accessibility issues. It was clear that some respondents, in particular the Parent Council, are wary of replacing a school with a new build which might not meet their

expectations or match some of the facilities that they have now. Opposition has already been expressed by local residents to any form of development within the site and this challenge will need to be carefully considered and progressed. Given this juxtaposition, it is proposed that further consultation within the cluster is carried out to discuss all these concerns and to help design a concept that will deliver the best outcome for the children and community of the Peebles cluster. It is also hoped that this consultation will facilitate a platform for all stakeholders to work together to achieve a learning provision to meet the overriding principles of both the School Estate Review and the Christie Commission. This work will need to link into housing developments and the production of accurate medium and long term pupil roll projections.

- c) In Selkirk, while there was strong appetite for change, it was also clear that many respondents also had concerns about the current primary provision in the cluster regarding condition, suitability and falling rolls (valley primary schools). It is therefore proposed that further engagement is undertaken with all the school communities across the cluster to determine what the future of all stages of education should look like across the Selkirk cluster. There was a real interest expressed in exploring other models of learning in the town. It should be noted that this exploration does not make any presumption regarding the rural school provision within the cluster; the concept needs scoped out within each nursery/primary school learning community based upon educational and community benefits of current provision and possible same benefits within a future concept.
- 11.5 Given the requirement for a bespoke solution for each cluster, it is proposed that approval is given to the commencement of a Secondary School Individualised Strategic Plan. At this stage this will involve:
  - a) Carrying out further consultations within the communities to work to establish a deliverable concept for the future of learning in the cluster;
  - b) Establishing briefs to enable options analyses to be carried out to establish what options are available in each school cluster regarding location, facilities etc;
  - c) Establishing links with local businesses within the cluster to identify opportunities to work together regarding curriculum opportunities;
  - d) Identifying and working with other potential stakeholders in the public, third and private sector to help define a concept and a solution for each cluster which will meet the principles of the School Estate Review and the Christie Commission;
  - e) Carrying out further analysis regarding to medium and long term pupil roll projections;
  - f) Working with Finance and meeting with SFT and Scottish Government officers to discuss the Scottish Government's investment programme.

- 11.6 While the Secondary School Individualised Strategic Plan is progressed, and in response to issues raised by pupils, it is recommended that works continue at the schools under the School Estate Block Allocation Programme to improve the learning environment: this will include works on the PE Department at Galashiels Academy; ongoing improvements to improve condition and use of space in Hawick High School; the creation of improved social space at Selkirk High School; improved accessibility at Peebles High School.
- 11.7 A progress report will be brought back to Council in October 2018.

#### 12 IMPLICATIONS

#### 12.1 Financial

The proposed works at Galashiels, Hawick, Peebles and Selkirk will be funded by the School Estates Block Allocation Programme.

Transformation of the Secondary School Estate will require significant additional funding with financial support from the Scottish Government being a pre requisite. The replacement of Kelso High School and the development of the new Jedburgh Intergenerational Campus has attracted funding from Scottish Government to meet 66% of eligible capital costs.

Both schools have been delivered using a revenue funding model which is designed to fund the annual running costs, eg rates, cleaning, power etc, life cycle and financing costs of the building.

For illustrative purposes the additional costs of Kelso High School were £467,000 at 2018/19 prices and the Jedburgh Campus is anticipated to be £1,435,000 in 2020/21 prices. These sums are the additional cost per annum to the Council. Both figures are net of Government financial contributions. The costs of new school provision can be expected to be comparable to the costs of Jedburgh below, but will vary depending on the footprint of the buildings, applicable inflation and the facilities delivered therefrom. It should be noted that these costs exclude costs that will be avoided through not having to maintain old time expired buildings.

Net additional costs (compared to previous Budget):

	Kelso £	Jedburgh £
Running costs, rates, FM etc	192,000	160,000
Lifecycle costs	275,000	300,000
Financing (1)		975,000
Total additional annual	467,000	1,435,000
Council cost		

(1) The funding model for Kelso required the Council to pay for construction of the new Broomlands and Langlee Primary Schools with financing costs of Kelso met by grant from Scottish Government.

Previous Annual Running Cost Budget for Schools \*

	£
Kelso	304,000
Jedburgh Grammar	321,000
Howdenburn	102,000
Parkside	94,000

<sup>\*</sup>Existing buildings are not life-cycled.

# 12.2 Risk and Mitigations

The main risks to these proposals is the challenge of financing these remaining 'communities for the future – including secondary school learning provision' and managing the additional costs that these improved buildings will bring to the overall fiscal context of the Council. The stakeholder responses and assessment of suitability/condition of the buildings clearly identify the case for improvement when compared to the national context. These risks will be mitigated in the interim through the prioritisation of the annual 'block allocation' allocated to the school estate. The medium term need for significant investment is being mitigated by this ongoing work and preparation of a case for change in each community and ongoing dialogue with the Scottish Government.

# 12.3 Equalities

Equalities Impact Assessments will be carried out in relation to the individual proposals for each school.

#### 12.4 Acting Sustainably

Acting sustainably is embedded within all actions contained within the School Estate Review.

# 12.5 Carbon Management

Carbon management assessments will be contained within the individual community plans of the next stage of the School Estate Review.

#### 12.6 Rural Proofing

Rural proofing is embedded in the legislation which governs the School Estate Review.

#### 12.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

#### 13 CONSULTATION

13.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and the Clerk to

the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

13.2 Given the likely high levels of public interest, there has been close liaison with Corporate Communications.

## Approved by

# Donna Manson Service Director Children & Young People Signature ......

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Donna Manson	Service Director, Children and Young People

**Background Papers:** School Estate Review Next Steps 2017/2018 (Executive

Committee - November 2017)

Previous Minute Reference: Executive Committee, 7 November 2017

**Appendices:** Appendix 1: Summary of Responses

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Donna Manson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA