
PEEBLES HIGH SCHOOL – UPDATE REPORT

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

28 January 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress with the Peebles High School project following the report to Council on 17 December 2020.**
- 1.2 The report to Council on 17 December 2020 advised that the feasibility study to replace the parts of the school lost during the fire in November 2019 had been completed. The report identified that Officers had reservations on the findings of this study on the basis of it being part new build/part refurbishment.
- 1.3 A feasibility study for a possible new build option has now been completed allowing a more comprehensive review of the advantages and disadvantages of the options to be considered.
- 1.4 Officers recommend that the new build option presents advantages in terms of saving time and minimising disruption. Subject to Council approval, the new build option should be taken forward to the Capital Investment Plan 2021/22.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council:-**
 - (a) Notes the contents of this report.**
 - (b) Approves that the option to provide a new build solution provides the most advantageous benefits and, subject to the Capital Investment Plan 2021/22 affordability, should be taken forward to delivery.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The report to Council on 17 December 2020 provided Members with an update on the feasibility study for the replacement of the parts of the school lost during the fire of November 2019. The report also discussed the likely outcome of the settlement of the insurance claim with the Council's Insurance provider.
- 3.2 In addition, the report identified that Officers had concerns about the limitations of the benefits that the partial new build / partial refurbishment project would provide. From this, a follow on feasibility study was suggested that would consider a new build solution for the substantive part of the school.
- 3.3 This short life feasibility study has now been completed allowing a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of both solutions.

4 OUTCOME OF NEW BUILD FEASIBILITY STUDY

- 4.1 Officers have concluded the feasibility study for the new build option validating the wording within the report to Council on 17 December 2020.
- 4.2 This study confirms that there is sufficient land within the existing school boundary to accommodate the construction of a new school building whilst retaining the existing school buildings during the construction period. There would be a loss of external playing facilities. The reduced buildings and temporary classrooms put in place following the fire in November 2019 can remain operational during the entire construction process for the new build. This would be referred to as a tandem build arrangement.
- 4.3 Following the construction of the new building, the school can decant into this enabling the remaining old buildings to be demolished. This results in minimising disruption to young learners.
- 4.4 Within this option, the existing Sports Block constructed in 2013/14 would be retained. It would however be extended to provide the additional gymnasium, dance and changing facilities lost to the November 2019 fire.
- 4.5 The area of ground that the current school building sits on would be replaced with a mixture of hard, soft landscaping and rationalised car parking.
- 4.6 Similar to the partial new build/partial refurbishment option, there is sufficient area of land within this option to provide a 3G synthetic surface playing field.
- 4.7 Overall, the completed school would consist of an entirely new school building, external landscaping and 3G pitch along with the existing Sports Block and 2G synthetic pitch providing a level of equivalence to the facilities completed at Kelso HS and Jedburgh Grammar Campus.
- 4.8 Officers have also validated the £46M cost estimate referred to in the report to Council on 17 December 2020. This is based on the new building option including the demolition of the old buildings, diversion of a water main, landscaping and the 3G synthetic pitch.

- 4.9 Given the entire new build principle of this option, it is expected that construction would take 24 months from the start of building works to the point where the building would be operational allowing young learners to move in. There would be a follow on phase for the demolition of the old buildings and making good of the ground with hard and soft landscaping but this would not have an impact on young learners.
- 4.10 The Council has been successful with the bid to Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP). It would be reasonable to state the complete new build option would provide for a better way to achieve as low as possible energy usage targets. This is one of 4 key funding criteria within the LEIP.

5 COMPARISON OF OPTIONS

Capital Cost

- 5.1 The report to Council on 17 December 2020 identified that the partial new build/partial refurbishment option would be to a base cost of £36m for the new build. The capital cost increases for refurbishment works that would be required to the Millennium Wing. For the purposes of a project forecast within the 2021/22 Capital Investment Plan process, a budget of £43M has been allowed for.

Disruption During Construction

- 5.2 For the part new build/part refurbishment option the report to Council on 17 December 2020 noted that to support more flexible collaborative learning it would be envisaged that the existing cellular classroom arrangement in the Millennium Wing would be adapted so the building is more consistent with the layout and style of Jedburgh Grammar Campus.
- 5.3 Undertaking these alterations will place a pressure on the current teaching spaces within the school. The Millennium Wing contains 34 teaching spaces out of the original 94. 32 teaching spaces were lost to the November 2019 fire. With the provision of temporary modular cabins, the school is operating at high level of capacity meaning that there is very little free space available within the school. This means that the refurbishment of the Millennium Wing will be disruptive and need careful management.
- 5.4 In addition, it would be entirely appropriate to introduce a fire suppressant system, probably through sprinklers, within the Millennium Wing. This would be significantly invasive as a retro-fit.

Indicative Construction Programme

- 5.5 The feasibility study for the part new build/partial refurbishment option identified that it would take 32 months to complete the new build part. This is largely driven by the phased approach to the construction given that it joins on to the Millennium Wing.
- 5.6 Completing the refurbishment to the Millennium Wing after the completion of the new build element would need a further period of approximately 7 – 8 months. The work would need to progress at a slow rate to maximise the number of teaching spaces available.
- 5.7 Undertaking this refurbishment at the end of the construction process means that overall it will take some 40 months to complete the project from start of finish in terms of a fully operational school. This is over 1

year longer than the new build option and would place a greater level of disruption to the young learners than the stand alone new build option.

	Part New Build / Part Refurbishment	New Build
Capital Cost	£43M	£46M
Disruption During Construction	3 phase construction to opening	1 phase construction to opening
Construction Period to opening	40 months	24 months
Sustainability Options	Limited ability to upgrade the Millennium Wing without significant stripping back	Positive ability to design and implement a range of material and energy saving features

6 WAY FORWARD

- 6.1 Officers recognise that the complete new build option is £3m more expensive than the part new build/part refurbishment option. However, the overall benefits of time saving and minimised disruption are significant enough for Officers to recommend that the new build option is taken forward as part of the Capital Investment Plan 2021/22.

7 COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 7.1 The recommendations contained within the report to Council on 17 December 2020 in terms of digital consultation remain valid for the new build option. Subject to the Capital Investment Plan 2021/22, Officers will commence community based consultation that will be digital themed.
- 7.2 On the basis that the new build option can be located within the existing school boundary. Subject to this being validated, there will not need to be a formal consultation in accordance with Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 7.3 The project, however, will be over 2 hectares and will require a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) under planning legislation. This will take place during 2021 and will involve community consultation. This will be in advance of a full planning application.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Financial

- (a) The revised budget forecast has been calculated at £46M. This is £16M greater than the budget contained within the 2020/21 Capital Investment Plan which also assumed a £10M insurance settlement. As a result an additional £20M is required to deliver this project which will be included as part of the 2021/22 Capital Investment Plan process.

- (b) The capital cost of this project will need to be funded directly by the Council. However, the successful bid to the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Improvement Programme means that Scottish Government support will be provided over a 25 year period to help with the running cost of the building provide that certain criteria are met. The funding criteria are;
- Energy consumption
 - Indoor air quality
 - Digital
 - Economic growth

8.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) The report to Council on 17 December 2020 identified that there was a risk associated with the part new build/part refurbishment option not achieving the high standard of facility that the Council aspires to. This risk will be mitigated with the new build option where the project team will be less constrained by having to work with the existing Millennium Wing.
- (b) The report to Council on 17 December 2020 identified the phased nature of the construction of the part new build/part refurbishment option. This would have created a disruption risk to young learners and extend the projects delivery programme by 16 months. This risk will be minimised with the new build option.
- (c) The report to Council on 17 December 2020 identified a budget risk for the part new build/part refurbishment option in terms of the Capital Investment Plan 2020/21. This risk remains for the new build option. A revised budget for the project will be assessed as part of the Capital Investment Plan for 2021/22.

8.3 Equalities

- (a) An Integrated Impact Assessment has not been carried out on this report.
- (b) It is anticipated that there are no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

8.4 Acting Sustainably

It is noted that a new build option for Peebles HS will provide significant advantages in terms of the ability to design the build holistically. The new build option will provide improved opportunities to achieve the Scottish Government's funding criteria on energy consumption and air quality. The project will also have improved ability to consider a range of different and sustainable materials to that available for the part new build / part refurbishment option given the need to blend and coordinate in with the Millennium Wing.

8.5 Carbon Management

The new build option will also allow for greater ability to design the building so as to consider carbon management in the material choices, the construction process and the energy demands/sources.

8.6 Rural Proofing

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

8.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

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

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

John Curry

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Background Papers: Report to Scottish Borders Council 17 December 2020

Previous Minute Reference: Nil

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