
HAWICK HIGH SCHOOL - PROJECT UPDATE

Report by Director - Infrastructure & Environment

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

23 September 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is to provide an update on the delivery of the new Hawick High School.**
- 1.2 A report to Council on 29 November 2018 identified a secondary school estate review for Galashiels, Hawick, Peebles and Selkirk. The report covered the continuing progress for the individualised strategic plans and the next steps to be undertaken. At that time Hawick was considered to follow on from Galashiels in terms of investment.
- 1.3 The fire at Peebles High school in November 2019 forced a revision to the investment strategy with an acceleration of that school replacement. Both Galashiels and Peebles High Schools have continued to make progress.
- 1.4 The development work for Hawick High School has also continued and the project delivery team are now able to report on a preferred location for the replacement of the school.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that Council:-**
 - (a) Notes the contents of the report and approves that there appears to be a technically acceptable option to locate the replacement of Hawick High School within the existing school site**
 - (b) Approves that a community consultation exercise is undertaken to present the preferred option.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In April and November 2018, reports to Council identified the creation of individualised strategic plans for Galashiels Academy, Hawick, Peebles and Selkirk High Schools. At that time, investment in Hawick High School was intended to follow on after Galashiels Academy.
- 3.2 The fire at Peebles High School forced a change in the investment strategy with Peebles accelerated within the Capital Investment Plan. The new Galashiels Community Campus and Peebles High School have successfully secured funding via Scottish Governments Learning Estate Investment Programme and have been progressing through consultation and design stages during 2021.
- 3.3 For Hawick High School, the 2018 Council noted that 7 possible sites had been identified within the town, but no preferred option was recommended at that time, pending further review work.
- 3.4 The report also noted that there remained a decision about the educational model for the replacement between a secondary school only or campus style model incorporating elements of primary school provision within the town.

4 PROGRESS WITH THE PREFERRED OPTION

- 4.1 While significant effort had been made on the projects in Galashiels and Peebles, development work has continued with the individualised plan for Hawick High School.
- 4.2 Since 2018, a Technical Team have been appointed to undertake further development work. Of the sites identified issues have been highlighted related to zoning for business, mixed use or industrial use within the Local Development Plan. The use of these sites for educational purpose would be seen as being detrimental to the wider economic health of the town. This remains the position within the Local Development Plan 2020.
- 4.3 Since 2018, significant progress has been made with the delivery of the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme. The project has commenced on site and works around the existing High School and the Common Haugh are making significant progress.
- 4.4 With the flood protection scheme underway providing 1 in 75 year protection and understanding the benefits that this brings to the existing school site the technical team reviewed this possible option.
- 4.5 Locating a new school on the existing site would need a greater level of flood protection than the current flood scheme provides and the team have been assessing the options for achieving this. The target would be to provide a level of protection consistent with SEPA / Planning requirements and the flood risk profile.

- 4.6 A feasibility study was then prepared to consider a new build within the existing site that considers this constraint. The existing school buildings are larger than needed to support the current school roll. As a result the accommodation can be rationalised without detrimental disruption to the education of young learners to enable the construction of a new building.
- 4.7 The results of this study proved encouraging. It noted that the existing school has large elements of it sitting at ground level which displace large volumes of flood water placing a risk to neighbouring buildings. The proposed new building, positioned with a reduced footprint on a plinth set at a level consistent with SEPA requirements would sit outwith the flood risk level and would not increase the flood risk to adjacent properties in the same way. Both aspects are a fundamental requirement of a planning application within a flood risk area.
- 4.8 Locating the new building on the existing site would ensure that the school remains at the heart of the community, continuing well over 100 years of education provision at this important town centre location. It would ensure continued access to the adjacent synthetic 3G and 2G sports pitches at the Volunteer Park and the wider Wilton Lodge Park. It would also continue to benefit from the established access arrangements at the Common Haugh for bus travel to and from the school. There is also significant investment with the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme in terms of the Active Travel Network and the existing school site connects well with this initiative.

5 CONSULTATION WITH SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY

- 5.1 Earlier in 2021, a review meeting with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and SBC's Flood Protection officer was undertaken. SBC Planning officers participated in this review. The feasibility study and an outline flood study report was reviewed during these meetings. SEPA officers provided feedback that suggests there are prospects for a new building to be located within the existing school site. This is a positive outcome and demonstrates that there appears to be a technically acceptable solution at the existing school site.

6 NEXT STAGES - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 6.1 Having established that the existing site appears to be feasible, a concept design for the new building has been identified. With some adjustments to the existing operational school, it is possible to construct a 4 storey new build in the area of ground between the adjacent cricket club and the older school buildings. Displacement of the existing social area and music buildings would be required.
- 6.2 This arrangement ensures that the school can remain operational during the entire construction stage. Subject to the displacement to social area and music subjects, the construction would take place in a single phase. This will be of benefit to young learners in terms of minimised disruption during construction and provide for finished building at the earliest point within the overall development.

- 6.3 After the new build is completed, open and operational, a follow on phase would see all of the remaining buildings demolished and a new public entrance plaza provided. The provision of this public open space at or near the existing ground level is consistent with the approach to the flooding issue so as not to increase the flood risk to adjacent properties.
- 6.4 It is proposed that the overall benefits of this preferred option are presented to the local community in the form of an engagement event. During 2021 most of the community based engagement on other projects such as Galashiels Community Campus have been entirely online. While this medium has, out of necessity, been made to work, it is proposed that a blended approach involving online and in-person engagement is developed and undertaken during the remainder of 2021/22.
- 6.5 The development of the new Hawick High School and the ongoing construction of the Hawick Flood Protection Scheme, including the Active Travel Network are significant projects for the town. Plans are in place to construct a new Business Centre that is intended to open in 2022. In addition, Wilton Lodge Park has seen investment in recent years with the 'Parks for All' funding from National Lottery.
- 6.6 While the proposed engagement will be focused on the new Hawick High School, the approach will reflect the wider placemaking proposals endorsed at Council in August. A Placemaking theme will be ingrained in the High School engagement so as to realise a wider town based dimension.

7 PROJECT SCOPE

- 7.1 The 2018 Council report identified that the new Hawick High School should provide a design capacity of 900, with an additional Enhanced Provision of 50. Using recognised area metrics, the school will be designed to allow for around 10,500m² of teaching and learning space.
- 7.2 It also noted that a campus style of education could be considered. In keeping with the progress and development of Galashiels Community Campus and Peebles High Schools, the benefits of a campus style of teaching and learning are not as beneficial in towns with larger pupils roll numbers. Therefore, it is proposed that the project remains as a replacement for the secondary school.
- 7.3 The development of the preferred option during the feasibility study illustrates a general location, shape and height of the proposed building. This concept design is shown within a technical study to this report as contained within Appendix A. This is a conceptual design at this stage and will evolve through design development prior to a full planning application being made at a later stage. The images contained within the feasibility study must be seen as conceptual at this stage in the process and provide for a starting point for the consultation exercise.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Financial

- (a) The budget covering the replacement for Hawick High School sits within the Capital Investment Plan as follows;

2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	Total £'000
200	400	937	8,624	21,593	16,446	48,200

- (b) The project development programme will continue in line with the approved budget provision. No project specific project funding is allowed for within the Capital Investment Plan at this stage. However, Council Officers will consider any future funding opportunities such as follow on phases of the Scottish Government's Learning Investment Estate Programme.

8.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) Identifying the existing school site as the preferred option ensures that no land is required that is outwith the control of the Council.
- (b) The flood risk to the site is recognised. The work undertaken to prepare the feasibility study has identified that there are prospects of being able to satisfy planning policy in relation to flooding. The pre-application discussions with SEPA have been undertaken to mitigate this risk. More detailed work and studies will be required, however, prior to being in a position to make a full planning application.
- (c) The current Capital Investment Plan identifies that the project is intended to be completed in 2026/27. The project budget, including current inflationary pressures and construction material shortages, will continue to be reviewed as the project progresses.
- (d) Choosing a preferred option within the existing school site will require what is referred to as a 'tandem build'. There is a risk that young learners education during the construction phase is disrupted. Choosing to locate the new build with minimal impact on the existing school buildings will ensure that the disruption is kept to a minimum.

8.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

- (a) The design and construction of the new school will be undertaken in such a way and to ensure that the project meets the requirements of the Equality and Fairer Scotland duties.

8.4 Sustainable Development Goals

- (a) The design and construction of the new school will be undertaken in such a way as to ensure sustainable consumption

8.5 Climate Change

- (a) The design and construction of the new school will ensure that energy use within the building is minimised.

- (b) The design and construction of the new school will ensure that the flood risk is mitigated to an appropriate and agreed level of provision

8.6 **Rural Proofing**

This report does not affect or amend rural proofing policies.

8.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

8.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

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

9 **CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 The Director - Finance & Corporate Governance, the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director – People, Performance & Change, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

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Author(s)

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Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference: Council – 26 April 2018, Council - 29 November 2018

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