

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
10 MARCH 2022
APPENDIX I

Questions from Councillor H. Scott

To Executive Member for Children and Young People

1. The Chair of Galashiels Academy Parent Council, on behalf of the other secondary school chairs in the Borders, has expressed concern at the reduction in the amount allocated to schools in the form of devolved school management (DSM) budgets. In the budget passed by SBC on 22 February it was stated that £2.9m would be allocated to recruit 49 new teaching and 26 support staff in our schools.
 1. Will this money be included in the devolved school management (DSM) budgets, or will it be administered centrally?
 2. Will DSMs be reduced or increased in 2022/23 and in future years, and in either case by how much?

Reply by Councillor C. Hamilton

1. I can confirm that the additional monies will be reflected within the revised Devolved School Management Scheme, currently being drafted by headteachers and senior officers and which will be implemented in the new financial year.
 2. The addition of this £2.9m means that the overall amount to be devolved to schools increases in 2022/23. The total amount devolved in 2021/22 was £58,399, 000 and in 2022/23 this will be at least £61,768, 000. Funding devolved to schools is generally calculated in response to school rolls so it is not possible to identify specific values beyond the coming financial year at this point.
2. On 25 November 2021, Scottish Borders Council unanimously approved a motion submitted by me:

“That this Council consults with secondary pupils and staff in the Scottish Borders, on proposals to install gender neutral toilets in the new Galashiels Community Campus, and Peebles High School, the aim to learn and implement lessons for the improvement of those arrangements from those schools and campuses where they are currently in use.”

 1. At what stage in its development is this consultation?
 2. When will it be circulated, and to whom?
 3. What question(s) will be asked?

Reply by Councillor C. Hamilton

1. Pupils from Kelso High and Jedburgh Campus will be asked to comment on their respective new build schools with specific questions on the organisation of the toilets, this information will be used along with details of other gender neutral examples e.g. those in The Tapestry building to consult with students and staff in Galashiels Academy and Peebles High School.
2. This will form part of the consultation process to be undertaken with pupils and staff across both schools on the wider design and plans for each school. These stakeholder events are scheduled to be held in Autumn of this year.
3. Specific questions have not been devised for this purpose.

Supplementary

Councillor Scott expressed his disappointment at the lack of progress in 4 months since his motion. He asked that Councillor Hamilton liaise with officers to report back at the final meeting of Council.

To Executive Member for Infrastructure, Travel and Transport

1. Whilst the building of the new Galashiels Community Campus is to be welcomed, some current users of the Focus Community Centre and its Management Committee, are concerned that whilst some groups might move to the Campus, others may wish to stay at the Focus Centre. This has led in turn to some wondering what future the Focus building has once the building of the Campus is complete.
 1. Has any decision been made as to the removal or retention of the Focus Centre building once the Campus is fully operational?
 2. If it is to be removed, when is that likely to occur?

Reply from Councillor Edgar

No decision has been made in relation to the Focus Community Centre following the opening of the Galashiels Community Campus, scheduled for 2025. While the Council owns and maintains the building, the Focus Centre like the other community centres across Scottish Borders, is operated by a Management Committee reporting to Live Borders. Officers from both Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders will monitor the use of the Focus Centre with the Management Committee following opening of the Galashiels Community Campus.

2. On 6 February 2020, I met with officers from SBC and Live Borders where much needed repairs in Stow Town Hall, were identified and later begun, especially in relation to dampness and the ingress of rainwater.
 1. Have all the necessary repairs been completed?
 2. If not what remains to be done and what is the estimated completion date?

Reply from Councillor Edgar

Due to the extensive dry rot outbreak, works have taken far longer than anticipated. Works are almost complete – there is one first floor room which needs to be re-floored. An order has been placed and Officers are awaiting confirmation of start and completion dates which are subject to material availability and the contractor's availability. Once dates are confirmed these can be shared.

Supplementary

Councillor Scott asked that the Community Council be kept updated with progress.