

Report

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 September 2022
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Proposal for a New Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) Secondary School Building (Kear School)
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide information relating to the proposal for a new social, emotional and behavioural needs (SEBN) secondary school building (Kear School)

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) approve, in principle, the proposal to establish a new SEBN secondary school building to replace Kear School;
- (2) approve the proposed site preference of Stonehouse;
- (3) note the requirement to undertake a statutory public consultation;
- (4) note the intention to fund 50% of the project via a bid into the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) with the remaining funding via developer contributions; and
- (5) note that should the LEIP funding bid be unsuccessful, the project would not progress at this time. A further review may take place within the context of the wider capital programme in future years.

3. Background

- 3.1. Over the last 15 years, South Lanarkshire Council has invested over £1.2 billion in its Schools Modernisation Programme. At the end of 2019, all nursery, primary, secondary and additional support needs (ASN) educational establishments were either rebuilt or had undergone a major refurbishment.
- 3.2. The Kear School building was initially constructed as a temporary decant facility for primary school pupils during the Schools Modernisation Programme. It is a 3-storey building of a modular construction type and was physically moved to the current site after use as a decant facility for primary schools under reconstruction.
- 3.3. A strategic Council priority is working to reduce inequality, and a key driver involves supporting children and young people to thrive, irrespective of their need. The area of SEBN has seen changes to legislation and increasing demand, as well as a greater understanding of the most appropriate environment required to provide effective support. In this respect, Education Resources has recently reviewed its estate for the provision of SEBN in both the primary and secondary school sectors.

3.4. Specialist Secondary educational provision for children and young people with SEBN is currently delivered across the following sites:-

- ◆ Kear School, Blantyre – provision for up to 60 pupils

Plus, Area Base Locations with provision for 12FTE places in each geographical location of South Lanarkshire:-

- ◆ St. Andrew's and St. Bride's High School, (East Kilbride)
- ◆ Calderside Academy, (Hamilton)
- ◆ Cathkin High School, (Rutherglen/Cambuslang)
- ◆ Carluke Lifestyles, (Clydesdale)

3.5. The learners within Kear campus can be identified as some of the most vulnerable within the authority. They are likely to suffer from varying levels of anxiety and sensory issues, an inability to regulate behaviour, oppositional and demand avoidance disorders, and have limited coping strategies which may lead them to engage in violent and unsafe behaviour when distressed.

3.6. Those attending Kear campus have complex additional support needs that cannot be met with the mainstream school model for varied and individual reasons. They are identified as requiring Stage 3 interventions (of the Staged Intervention process), that is, they require support from outwith a mainstream school but remain within a Council setting. Learners tend to move from mainstream learning to the Locality Bases or to Kear School if their needs cannot be met within a traditional educational model. This enables a more flexible and individualised response to be delivered to meet their individual learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs.

3.7. Learners who do not respond positively to placement in Kear School may be accommodated within day education or residential placements supported by independent partner agencies or agencies outwith education (Stage 4 of the Staged Intervention process).

4. Current position

4.1. The current Kear secondary school building does not provide a satisfactory environment for the delivery of education for SEBN secondary school pupils. It has fundamental limitations in its design, layout and specification in relation to provision of a positive learning environment for vulnerable young people. The building currently has a 'C' rating for Suitability and is the only South Lanarkshire Secondary School which does not have either an 'A' or 'B' rating. This provides a fundamental disadvantage to our most vulnerable children.

4.2. The building presents the following challenges:-

- ◆ Inadequate sound proofing throughout the building contributes to distractions across the learning environment.
- ◆ The multi storey nature and design does not lend itself to safe, effective and efficient movement around the building and supervision of learning spaces. As a result, although the provision could accommodate around 60 pupils, at any one time this is restricted to around 25.
- ◆ The fabric of the building is not resilient and where damage occurs resulting in an unsightly environment, there is an inevitable detrimental impact on the ethos and culture of the school.

- ◆ Outdoor space is limited with resultant impact on the breadth of curriculum offered. Evidence shows that natural, outdoor space can reduce distress and promote wellbeing in children and young people who have experienced trauma.
- ◆ Internal accommodation is limited in terms of flexibility of purpose: there are limited specialist teaching areas to enable delivery of a curriculum that will engage, inspire and promote aspirations and there are no facilities to enable parental and community partnerships to be extended and nurtured.
- ◆ Some of our young people currently educated externally could potentially return to the new provision.

4.3. The Council has invested significant amounts of funding into adaptations and reactive maintenance in order to make the building suitable for its educational role. However, the design and construction of the building is fundamentally unsuitable for its use.

5. Options Appraisal

5.1. Status Quo

Those who attend Kearsy campus have demonstrated that their complex needs cannot be met within the mainstream school model, that they often engage in unsafe behaviour when distressed and are identified as requiring Stage 3 specialist interventions (one level from external educational placement). As described above, continuing our educational provision in the existing campus, which is not robust enough in its fabric and design and does not match with expectations that all children and young people have access to a rich and stimulating curriculum, is not a long-term option if the Council is to meet the needs of SEBN secondary school age pupils.

5.2. Improve the Fabric of the Existing Building

Over the years, significant amounts of money have been spent in repairs to the fabric of the building. More is required and is eating into a significant amount of the overall repairs and maintenance budget which is intended for all schools in South Lanarkshire. With the recognition that the needs and behaviours of the young people are becoming increasingly complex, it is viewed that using this building for Kearsy secondary school pupils is not a long-term option if the Council is to meet the needs of SEBN secondary school age pupils. Outdoor space would remain inadequate.

5.3. Acquire Another Building

Any existing building would require to be adapted to suit the specific learning environment, must be robust enough to withstand physical damage, with the ability to manage safe and secure pupil movement during the day. Also, the importance of adequate outside space for mental health and wellbeing, physical activity and other outdoor learning was identified as a priority. On enquiring with Estates colleagues about alternatives, there has been nothing suitable identified within the Council portfolio which meets the requirements.

5.4. Design and build a New Kearsy Secondary School Building Suitable for the Young People in Attendance

This is the preferred option to ensure Kearsy School will achieve a rating of 'A' for Suitability and become a sector leading secondary school provision. A new design and build project would provide better facilities to enhance learning opportunities and curriculum choice, much improved external space for mental health and wellbeing and other types of outdoor learning, and a more robust physical environment.

6. Proposal for a New Build SEBN Kear School

6.1. The proposal is to design and build a new provision on a more suitable site which could accommodate 60 pupils. Preliminary investigations identified a number of potential sites listed below:-

- (i) Former Ridgepark School site, Lanark
- (ii) Former Garden Centre site at Chatelherault Country Park, Ferniegair
- (iii) Dalton site, Cambuslang
- (iv) Blaes Pitch at Peter Brownlie Park, Cambuslang
- (v) Union Street, Stonehouse
- (vi) Westwoodhill pitches, East Kilbride

6.2. The Union Street site in Stonehouse has been identified as the most appropriate site out of those listed above for the development of a new SEBN school. Any transfer to this potential new site would require a statutory public consultation.

6.3. Given Kear School has no specific catchment, the formal consultation would include all parents, carers and pupils across South Lanarkshire, and the local community of Stonehouse, with expected enhanced interest from the community closest to the potential site. The purpose would be to gauge their views on the site, and to allow proper consideration of the suitability of the site prior to the Council making any decision. This process could take around 6 to 8 months to complete.

6.4. The timing of a new Kear secondary school building would have to be confirmed following the confirmation of LEIP funding and the outcome of the statutory public consultation due to the relocation of the school.

7. Feasibility Study

7.1. In Autumn 2019, a feasibility study to identify the unique requirements of SEBN Secondary Education was commissioned. Consultants (Space Strategies) were appointed to:-

- ◆ Articulate the education and learning aims, priorities and ambition for the new school.
- ◆ Translate the vision into a series of spatial constructs which can support the priorities articulated for future learning.
- ◆ Provide a Space Budget which reflects the ambition for the school within a benchmarked efficient, effective and affordable envelope of space.
- ◆ Develop a concept design for the preferred site.

7.2. In terms of consultation, an inclusive approach was adopted with a variety of stakeholders including students, staff directly connected to Kear and other supporting specialists. The key strategic outcomes were identified as follows:-

- ◆ provide a safe, nurturing and inclusive space
- ◆ promote understanding and de-stigmatise SEBN provision
- ◆ encourage engagement, attendance and build positive relationships and positive destinations
- ◆ promote outdoor learning
- ◆ provide integrated community facilities

7.3. Determining the number of teaching spaces required within the SEBN sector is more fluid, complex and less predictable than in the mainstream sector for the following reasons:-

- ◆ The teacher to learner ratio (1:6 for this sector) is in some instances not achievable due to the needs of learners, peer to peer dynamics and need to cater for different stages/levels of ability.
- ◆ 1:1 learner to staff ratios can be required for particular learners.
- ◆ Personalised learning programmes and timetables can result in subjects being delivered in small groups.
- ◆ Learners can transition to Kear secondary school at multiple points throughout the school year as a result of Partnership Planning meetings.

7.4.. A high priority for the new school will be to encourage wider community use and participation, both during school hours and outwith school hours. This facility will assist the Council in achieving this objective. Key accommodation for community use during school hours include:-

- ◆ café
- ◆ hair and beauty
- ◆ skills space
- ◆ allotment and gardens

Outwith school hours the full range of school accommodation can be made available for community use including Nurture, Meeting Space, Performance/Assembly, Sports and English Language Teaching Work Space.

8. Other Implications

8.1. The new provision would be able to accommodate 60 learners in a safer, nurturing and inclusive environment and be able to offer an appropriate curriculum to suit learner needs. Current staffing levels can accommodate a roll of 60 learners.

9. Financial Implications

9.1. Capital Funding

Construction costs for this new facility are estimated to be £14 million. Given the general limited availability of Council funding, it is proposed that costs would be met from a mixture of developer contributions and the submission of a bid to the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP).

9.2. Funding submissions for LEIP require to be made by 31 October 2022 and can provide up to 50% of the funding required for any project subject to meeting specific criteria. Scottish Government Ministers will confirm funding decisions by the end of December 2022. As noted in the previous paper to Committee on Secondary School expansion proposals, those projects are viewed as the priority 1 bid, and take precedence over the Kear replacement facility. As such, if the LEIP bid for the Kear replacement facility was unsuccessful, then the project would not progress at this time. A further review may take place within the context of the wider capital programme in future years.

9.3. Table 1 shows the estimated costs and also the funding sources for the project.

Table 1: Estimate Cost and Funding Sources

	Estimate Budget	Developer Contributions	LEIP Funding Bid	Total Income
New Kear School	£14m	£7.0m	£7.0m	£14.0m

- 9.4. It is noted that there is a risk in terms of when the developer contributions will be received. This risk is increased by the dependency on the house-building market, whether developments have started and potential impact of the wider current economic conditions which could cause a reduction in the monies available for the project.
- 9.5. If, in December 2022 the LEIP bid is successful, the Council would reassess any changes in the likelihood of developer contributions over the coming years before committing to this project.
- 9.6. The timing of the estimated annual expenditure and income means that there are funding shortfalls across the project timeframe (£3.4 million in 2024/2025, rising to £4.7 million in 2025/2026 and then reducing to £3.7 million in 2026/2027). This is shown in Table 2. The timing of receipt of developer contributions will depend on house building activity. The in-year shortfalls mean that the Council will have to borrow to manage this on a cash-flow basis, with the borrowing repaid in future years once the developer contributions are received. The expenditure and income profile, as well as the cost of borrowing, is shown below.

Table 2: Profile of Spend / Income and Cost of Borrowing

New School	Kear	23/24 Est.	24/25 Est.	25/26 Est.	26/27 Est.	27/28 - 30/31 Est.	Total Est.
Expenditure		£1.2m	£9.2m	£3.6m	-	-	£14.0m
Income:							
Developer Contributions		-	-	£2.3m	£1.0m	£3.7m	£7.0m
LEIP Funding bid		£1.2m	£5.8m	-	-	-	£7.0m
Total Income		£1.2m	£5.8m	£2.3m	£1.0m	£3.7m	£14.0m
Cumulative Surplus/(Deficit)		-	(£3.4m)	(£4.7m)	(£3.7m)	-	-
Cost of Borrowing			£0.10m	£0.14m	£0.11m	-	£0.35m

- 9.7. Table 2 shows that there is a cost of borrowing of £0.350 million attached to the forward funding of this project. This position will be updated once the funding sources are confirmed. Any cost of borrowing would have to be met from within this project budget

9.8. Revenue Funding

There will be revenue consequences in the form of associated property costs, however, it is envisaged that these would be funded by the transfer of budget already allocated for the running costs of the existing Kear School building. No additional staffing would be required beyond that already in place.

10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

10.1. It is our aim that the new proposed school will not only deliver an efficient, high quality, flexible teaching space suitable for SEBN secondary education, but will also deliver an affordable and sustainable designed campus in line with the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme priorities, as follows:-

- ◆ Suitability Condition Rating 'A'
- ◆ Net Zero Emissions
- ◆ Healthier Living Environments
- ◆ Infrastructure Technologies
- ◆ Job Creation

10.2. The design will also require to target meeting Council parameters including a Green Profile Rating of minimum 'Very Good', standards on CO₂ emission levels and the use of low and zero-carbon technologies. It is the ambition that this new school is designed maximising natural resources for light, heat and ventilation, where possible, and achieve a high energy efficiency certification based on the design, before any introduction of renewable energy sources. It is hoped that the new school will have no reliance on fossil fuels as part of the Council's transition to net zero.

10.3. The inclusion of natural environment solutions into the design of the building and surrounding area - green infrastructure, allotments and gardens and outdoor learning space - will provide many co-benefits including climate adaptation measures, carbon sequestration, improved biodiversity, air quality and the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff.

10.4. The external environment would include:-

- ◆ Allotments for Education and Community Use
- ◆ Active Play and Outside Learning Opportunities
- ◆ Enhancement of local existing Biodiversity

11. Other Implications

11.1. The timing of this project would be confirmed following the confirmation of LEIP funding and the outcome of any public consultation due to the relocation of the school.

11.2 Risk implications are referred to in paragraph 9.4 of the report

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

12.1. As this does not involve a change to a new policy there is no need for an Equality Impact Assessment. There will be a statutory consultation to canvass opinion of stakeholders on the location of the site.

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31 August 2022

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ We will work to put people first and reduce inequality
- ◆ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places
- ◆ Inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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