

Minute of All Elected Member Seminar



Beeslack Community High School and Penicuik High School Learning Estate Investment Programme

Date	Time	Venue
25 April 2023	9.30 am	Virtual – MS Teams

Present:

Councillor Scott (Chair)	Councillor Alexander
Councillor Cassidy	Councillor McKenzie
Councillor Milligan	Councillor McCall
Councillor McManus	Councillor McEwan
Councillor Parry	Councillor Pottinger
Councillor Russell	Councillor Smail
Councillor Virgo	

In attendance:

Dr Grace Vickers, Chief Executive	Kevin Anderson, Executive Director Place
Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships	Fiona Clandillon, Head of Development
Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place	David Gladwin, Acting Chief Finance Officer (Section 95 Officer)
Mark Bedwell, Executive Business Manager	Andrew Souter, Project Manager
David Brown, Depute Principal – University of Edinburgh	Craig Biddick, Head Teacher, Penicuik HS
Lisa McGlade, Depute Head Teacher, Beeslack CHS	Liz Schoter, Personal Assistant (note)

1. Welcome and Apology for Absence

Councillor Ellen Scott, Cabinet Member for Education, welcomed everyone to the meeting and the external attendees from the University of Edinburgh and the respective Head Teachers, she invited officers in attendance to provide a progress update on the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) and specifically the funded projects in Midlothian for the Beeslack Community High School replacement & Penicuik High School refurbishment projects and share the presentation.

Apologies were received from Councillor Curran.

2. Presentations

Learning Estate Strategy Delivery - Replacement of Beeslack Community High School and Refurbishment and Expansion of Penicuik High School (Attached).

3. Questions

Councillor Scott thereafter led the questions from members to officers.

Questions and Answers

Q) Councillor Parry – Has there been any thought as to how relationships will evolve between the curriculum and economy and how it will work between partnerships.

A) David Brown referred to the experiential learning classroom at Easter Bush which has been used for a number of years, when children visit it can be seen that they think differently, i.e. how they can perform remote experiments that can be done from their classrooms. Next steps would be to look at what's been achieved at Newbattle Centre of Excellence and to be guided and lead by the council to think how we get the experiential learning, how we combined projects, how we build on the experiential lab outcomes that we've already got and how to expand this into our wider education portfolio.

Q) Councillor Virgo – How will we manage to decant if trying to deliver both projects by 2026.

A) FR – We are developing a number of options to look at whether we can undertake the refurbishment work with part of the school in situ or whether we need to take the whole school out. In order to deliver both projects we will have to adjust our plan in terms of the original intent which was to move the Penicuik HS pupils into Beeslack CHS after they had moved into their new

school building. That is now looking highly unlikely so looking at alternative options.

Q) Councillor Smaill – Are we in dialogue with Scottish Government regarding decant if the datelines are not met for these projects and the need for a Plan B.

A) FR – In regards to communication with Scottish Government we are due to provide an update to Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) on both projects. Regular updates are provided to SFT. Any delay in the projects will be built into our risks and regular updates provided.

Councillor McManus shared his positive views regarding the future plans of Penicuik High School and Beeslack CHS, as a former student at Penicuik HS it is really welcome and he felt that the students will really welcome and benefit from it too. He also thanked everyone involved for the work done.

Councillor Cassidy thanked the University for having faith to come in and join Midlothian Council in the project and noted his thanks, and also that he is looking forward to the opening.

Q) Councillor Scott – If we don't build a swimming pool, will there be an option to build one at a later date if required.

A) KA – The intentions is to go out to public consultation first however there are other community considerations in both projects.

Councillor Scott - Thanked all and conveyed her thanks regarding the opportunity to progress with the plans.

Councillor McKenzie – In terms of the reference to Newbattle High School mentioned during the presentation, as ward Councillor, he expressed how at times during the project it will be tough going with difficult decisions however he highlighted the achievements gained from Newbattle Campus and the academical outcomes achieved there, and to use this ambition to drive the project forward as it has a positive impact on people lives.

Councillor Alexander – Stated that she is delighted that the school is now going ahead and is glad of the ambition that is being shown and hope it goes even further. Councillor Alexander asked if we are progressing with an outdoor swimming pool.

A) FC answered that this was not part of the brief.

Q) Councillor Virgo – Is it still the intention to build the school to Passivhaus standard?

A) FC advised that the pricing we have reflects a building that's built to LEIP band A standards, which are not at Passivhaus level.

Councillor Smail endorsed Councillor Alexander's idea of wild swimming and highlighted the need to increase public access to Gladhouse Reservoir including both of the new schools so that they can enjoy wild outdoor swimming and suggested that a car parking facility that could also be used by the schools would be welcomed.

Councillor Scott thanked everyone for taking part in the meeting and closed the meeting at 10:19am.

4. Summary/Conclusions/Future Action

Paper to be submitted to Midlothian Council to endorse:

- i. Scope of Projects
- ii. Revised Heads of Terms for Beeslack CHS replacement
- iii. Decant Strategy for Penicuik HS
- iv. Total development costs for each project
- v. Capital Expenditure Budget allocation in General Services Capital Plan

Note - University of Edinburgh Paper to be submitted to the University of Edinburgh Estates Committee on 15th May 2023 and License to Occupy agreement required to enable Council school site and construction works to progress.