

James Gillespie's High School Council
Note of Meeting Tuesday 1st December
JGHS Rebuild

Anne Henderson, Chair of the School Council introduced Project Board Members who gave a presentation

- Billy Macintyre, Head of Resources for Children and Families. Chair of the Project Board and Project Sponsor.
- John Baker, City Development Department. Project Monitor with expertise on Design and Construction
- Alistair Wallace, Partner, Thomas and Adamson. External Project Manager.

Presentation

Billy Macintyre

Two thirds of the funding for the new build has been secured from the Scottish Futures Trust. A report will be prepared for the City of Edinburgh Council in April, once the final details of the funding arrangements are known.

He gave a brief outline of the scope of the proposed new school;

- Accommodate approx 1150 to 1200 pupils
- An iconic building and exemplar school
- A sustainable school, Breeam, Excellent level
- New all weather pitch
- Four lane, 25m swimming pool
- Consideration to be given to greater community use.
- New build is only for the High School. The primary school is not included in these proposals.
- The team gained very useful experience from the design and build of Portobello High School.

Alistair Wallace

Outline Programme for the new build, currently conceived as a six year project. The first step is to develop the Educational Brief. Barry Best, a specialist in educational brief process has been engaged to support this work. Alex Wallace and Neil McCallum will work with teachers and others to consider what kind of school is required. They will try to describe the environment which can best contribute to education and learning for Gillespie's students now and for the next thirty to forty years. This process will begin next week.

By next summer, a report giving the overall look and feel and cost of the new building should be available.

The planning process will begin at the end of 2010 and early 2011

Building work is due to start on site at the end of 2012 and to continue until the end of 2015. This timeline is based on the school remaining opening throughout the build process.

The option of a decant of the school to the old Tynecastle High School building has very recently emerged. This option is currently being investigated and a report will be prepared for the Project Board to consider in January. If the board determine that this option should be taken forward, a further process will be put in motion. This will include

- Consideration of the proposals by the Director of Children and Families and the Convenor of the Education Committee
- Statutory Consultation period with parents and other stakeholders
- Consideration by Councillors in the City of Edinburgh Council.

Factors to be considered will include

- The fabric of the Tynecastle building
- The suitability of this building to accommodate JGHS.
- Health and Safety issues, transport to a new site, the school continuing to operate with building work on site.
- Any benefits to be achieved from a decant e.g. faster build, reduced cost, improved design options.

The Project Board also includes

Alex Wallace, Head Teacher

Bill Ness, Head of Property, City of Edinburgh Council

Finance and Communications experts from City of Edinburgh Council

Marilyn McLaren – Parents need to be patient. Professional educators need time to think and time to input to the initial brief. This brief can then be used to develop the actual school buildings. Parents and students will be involved through out the process.

Q&A Session

Q Why decant?

A The opportunity has presented itself and needs to be considered. Tynecastle was not an option when initial proposals were put forward, it is now. It may save money and may reduce the build time by up to one year.

Q Concerns about safety in travelling to Tynecastle, at least two busy roads to cross.

A Safety issues will be a factor for consideration of any options. The provision of transport to Tynecastle may be an option if a decant is taken forward. There are also safety issues to be considered if children remain on site during construction. Any options will be carefully assessed.

Q Concerns about two high schools operating in such close proximity.

A Measures such as different start and finish times could be considered to assist in managing the number of students in the area.

Q Are any other possible locations for a decant being considered?

A Yes, other Council options are being looked for and may be considered.

Q What is Breeam?

A An industry standard for buildings. It is recognised internationally and includes many factors including sustainability.

Q Why are we aiming for the excellent, rather than the highest level - outstanding?

A The outstanding level requires a zero carbon build. This is very expensive and may be unrealistic.

Q How much space per pupil will be available?

A 12m per pupil including swimming pool. Generally Scottish Futures Trust is considering 11m per pupil.

Q How do you even begin to consider what the school environment will be like in 30-40 years time?

A ICT is an unknown, the need is to build on what is known - we need flexible spaces, adaptable to different learning styles. Consideration should be given to social spaces, improved PE facilities and maintaining a large hall to come together as a school.

Q How far can we look for ideas and inspiration?

A World wide, all types of buildings for inspiration. Learning from educational establishments and best practice.

Q During the design and build stage will the school have additional resources to help manage?

A Part of the process is to consider the needs and funding available. Some funding is already in place and Neil McCallum has the role of Depute with responsibility for rebuild liaison.

Q Will children in feeder primaries be involved?

A Neil McCallum is already actively engaged with feeder primary schools.

The School Council will aim to keep in touch with parents as this project developments.

Any parent who have particular skills or expertise who would like to get a working group going on any aspect of the rebuild should contact Anne Henderson.

Assurances were given that parents and children will be involved in the design process for the new school. At the moment, the requirement is to give professional educators time and space to develop the education brief.

If the decant option is recommended, a further meeting will be held prior to the statutory consultation process beginning.

Other Issues

Budget

The council are seeking views about the budget priorities in the next year. Significant saving are required, approx £14million from Children and Families next year with similar sums in the next two years. A newsletter will be issued by the school council providing contact routes for parents who wish to give their views.

Cllr McLaren indicated that significant budget reductions are required. Constructive and creative suggestions are required to make the best use of the available budget.

Next meeting 1st week in February