

Agenda Item	7
Report No	DSA/16/22

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Dingwall and Seaforth

Date: 14 November 2022

Report Title: Ward Capital Projects – Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Housing and Property

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates Members on progress with the planned replacement building for St. Clement's School on a new site in Dingwall.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:

i. **NOTE** the progress made in taking forward the St. Clement's School project.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource:** The delivery of capital projects is being managed within the overall funding allocations in the revised Capital Programme approved by the Council in December 2021 pending the outcome of the review of the Capital Programme that is underway.
- 3.2 **Legal:** The Council's capital investment plans support the efforts to meet its statutory obligations to maintain compliance of buildings and efficiently manage the school estate.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island):** The Council's capital investment programme will make a significant contribution to the economic recovery across Highland communities over the coming years.
- 3.4 **Climate Change/Carbon Clever:** All planned new build projects will help meet Council and Scottish Government targets and objectives in relation to energy efficiency and climate change.
- 3.5 **Risk:** All risk matters are kept under regular review and managed on both individual projects and across programmes of work.

3.6 **Gaelic:** Not applicable.

4. Background

- 4.1 An extensive review was carried out to assess potential sites in Dingwall for their suitability as a location for the new school building and this included engagement with the Stakeholder Group that was formed. Detailed analysis of two sites off Ferry Road and Dochcarty Brae was undertaken in 2021, with Ferry Road subsequently being ruled out due to flood and road access constraints. However, it was found that the development of the Dochcarty Brae site would be feasible.
- 4.2 The potential development of the Dochcarty Brae site was discussed at a Major Pre-Application Advice meeting in August 2021. The response advised that use as a school site would be supported, subject to addressing flood and access constraints. The site is now allocated and safeguarded for community uses in the Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan.
- 4.3 The Council agreed at meetings in June and September 2021 that a new school building for St. Clement's on a new site in Dingwall would be a priority for capital investment, and a budget of £13M was included in the revised Capital Programme approved in December 2021. The Council subsequently considered a report in June on the construction cost pressures impacting on the delivery of capital projects and agreed to carry out a review of the Capital Programme later this year, which will look at the phasing of the programme of works for the Council's capital projects. However, it was also agreed that design and planning work on all the major school projects at pre-construction stage, including St. Clement's, would continue.

5. Recent Progress

- 5.1 A statutory consultation exercise was carried out on the proposal to relocate the school and concluded in April 2022. A report on the outcome of the process was considered by the Education Committee on 29th September, and the Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that "St. Clement's School be re-located to the site off Dochcarty Brae to allow the construction of a new school building". The minutes of the Education Committee meeting were subsequently approved at the Council meeting on 27th October. The statutory consultation process is therefore complete.
- 5.2 Head of Terms for the purchase of the new site were agreed with the landowner, and a report recommending the purchase of the site was approved at the Economy and Infrastructure Committee meeting on 10th November.
- 5.3 The Council approved a report at its meeting on 22nd September agreeing 5 projects, including St. Clement's, to be nominated for consideration by the Scottish Government for inclusion in Phase 3 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP). The funding model for the LEIP is based on the local authority providing the capital funding for the projects, with revenue funding released by the Scottish Government over a 25-year period on evidence of the achievement of the following agreed outcomes.
- New learning environments are built to a high quality and are well maintained over the long term.
 - Ambitious energy efficiency targets are achieved over the long term and contribute to Net-Zero commitments.
 - The investment supports digitally enabled learning and advancements in technology.
 - The investment creates new jobs and enables inclusive economic growth.

- A reduction in Construction Embodied Carbon across the whole life of the project.

An announcement on the outcome of the bidding process is expected before the end of December.

- 5.4 Council officers have been collaborating with colleagues in Aberdeenshire Council who are currently working on a proposed new Special School building of a similar scale to St. Clement's. An initial Schedule of Accommodation has been prepared after consultation with school staff and colleagues in Education, and this is being compared with the proposals produced by Aberdeenshire, and lessons learned from earlier projects are being shared.
- 5.5 Some improvements have been completed to the main building at St. Clement's and other works may be necessary before the new school building is complete. The condition and suitability of the current buildings will continue to be monitored and any necessary actions will be implemented.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Housing and Property

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Background Papers:

1. Report to Highland Council meeting on 22 September 2002 "Learning Estate Investment Programme Update and Phase 3 Priorities"
https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/80509/item_13_learning_estate_investment_programme_leip_update_phase_3_priorities
2. Report to Education Committee meeting on 29 September 2022 "Review of the statutory consultation exercise on the Relocation of St. Clement's School, Dingwall"
https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/80470/item_12_review_of_the_statutory_consultation_exercise_on_the_relocation_of_st_clement_s_school_dingwall