

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee: 9 February 2011

Subject: Dumbarton Academy New Build: Progress Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise members of the progress being made in the design, procurement and construction phases of the project to rebuild Dumbarton Academy and to inform members of future target dates in the programme for the project.

2. Background

- 2.1** An announcement by Scottish Government in September confirmed that 66% funding would be made available to West Dunbartonshire Council to build a new Dumbarton Academy. Funding will be available from 2011/2012.
- 2.2** The planning application was submitted in October 2010 following the public planning exhibition on 28 August 2010.
- 2.3** Delivery of the new Dumbarton Academy is programmed for January 2013 with the external works including sports pitches and car parking being completed in July 2013.
- 2.4** A new all weather sports pitch, which forms an integral part of the future campus, was funded through this year's capital programme and has now been completed and is in use by the school.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The planning process has resulted in two issues which need to be addressed before any report can be submitted to the Planning Committee for approval.
- 3.1.1** The Scottish Environmental and Protection Agency (SEPA) has notified the Authority that they will raise an objection to the proposed plans to build a new Dumbarton Academy unless the flood prevention works are completed to the Knowle Burn in the Silverton area. However, this work is not scheduled for completion until around 2014/2015. Therefore, to prevent any delay in progressing the new build Academy, a 1 in 200 year flood risk assessment is being prepared on the department's behalf by Jacobs (Consultants) which, together with details of any necessary mitigation actions to be taken, will, it is anticipated, satisfy SEPA and allow them to withdraw their objections. The assessment will be forwarded to SEPA in early February.

- 3.1.2** A bat survey was carried out recently, but this was done outwith the breeding season. Droppings have recently been found in certain areas of the buildings and so the Scottish National Heritage (SNH) has, in accordance with current legislation, instructed that a new survey be conducted during the breeding season which is between May to September. No approval can be given by SNH for building demolitions until the bat survey has been completed and the resulting actions appropriately completed. A license will be applied for on the assumption of roosting bats in order to progress matters in the meantime. It should be noted that demolition of the existing school is not planned until 2012/2013 in any case and so the overall building programme will not be compromised.
- 3.1.3** In the expectation of receiving approvals from SEPA and SNH by June, the planning application will be submitted to a Planning Committee in August for consideration.
- 3.2** The procurement process is underway, with a total of 21 developers/builders having applied for consideration to submit tenders at the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) stage. The PQQs are currently being assessed and will be completed by mid February, when six companies will then be invited to submit tenders on or before 15 April 2011.
- 3.3** Whilst the programmed site start is scheduled for October, it was hoped that an early handover of the site to the successful contractor could be achieved in early July in order to set up site establishment and to demolish the Games Hall. However, the expected slight delay in gaining planning approval due to 3.1 above will prevent any early commencement of the works. It should be noted that this is not expected to compromise the programmed site start date of October, nor the programmed completion dates noted in 2.3 above.

4. People Implications

- 4.1** The procurement process is currently being resourced by the department's Schools Estate team and HEED Architectural Services, in liaison with architectural consultants, Keppie Design. Keppie Design is contracted to the project until contractor approval, following which HEED staff will provide full professional resources.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The new build Dumbarton Academy is currently estimated to cost £21m, and Scottish Government has agreed their funding element to be 10.7m.
- 5.2** Professional fees are included in the overall estimated cost of £21m.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is a risk of delay in the planned programme due to SEPA's current objection. However it is expected that the flood risk assessment and resulting flood prevention plan will mitigate the risk.

6.2 Even if bats are found to be nesting in the present building, there will be sufficient time to take appropriate action prior to demolition to ensure that the construction programme is not delayed.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1 No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact in this report.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 SEPA have posted notice that they will raise an objection to the proposed plans to build a new Dumbarton Academy unless the flood prevention works are completed to the Knowle Burn. However, a 1 in 200 year flood risk assessment is being prepared and it is anticipated that SEPA will withdraw their objection subject to appropriate action being taken to mitigate any risks arising from the flood risk assessment.

8.2 A bat survey is required to be carried out during the breeding season, namely between May and September, with any remedial action being taken thereafter if required. This will not compromise the construction programme.

8.3 Whilst an early site establishment date was hoped for in July, this will not now be possible since planning approval cannot now be achieved until August because of 8.1 and 8.2. However this is not expected to compromise the programmed site start date of October, nor the programmed completion dates of January 2013 for the new building and July 2013 for the external works, including sports pitches and car parking.

8.3 Members are asked to note the above report.

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Appendix: None

Background Papers: Council Report, 6 August 2009: Schools Regeneration – New Funding Stream

Wards Affected: 3