

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 DECEMBER 2009

NEW CUMNOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report by the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** To advise Members of the current position in relation to the replacement of Cairnhill and Castle Primary schools, New Cumnock.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Cabinet agreed on 19 March 2008 that Cairnhill and Castle Primary Schools be closed with effect from the end of the school session June 2008, that the pupils would transfer to a newly refurbished and merged school to be sited in the building of the current Castle Primary School and that New Cumnock Nursery School remain on the Castle Primary School campus. It was also agreed to the temporary decant of pupils to Cairnhill Primary, if appropriate, to allow completion of building work at the Castle/New Cumnock Nursery School site.
- 2.2** The former Castle and Cairnhill Primary Schools merged at the start of session 2008/09. Repairs works to the building at Cairnhill, which are necessary to allow the decant of pupils from the Nursery School are being progressed.
- 2.3** The Executive Director of Educational and Social Services report to Cabinet on 21 May 2008 provided an update on progress at that date and set out indicative timescales for the implementation and delivery of the project. At that time it was expected that design work would be completed by March 2009, tendering completed by September 2009; allowing work to commence on site by November 2009 with an expected completion in December 2010.
- 2.4** Cabinet was advised on 6 May 2009 that, based upon indicative designs prepared, it was anticipated that an uplift of approximately 20% on the initial budget allocation would be necessary and that there was a potential for further costs in relation to flood mitigation works identified following the completion of a flood risk assessment.
- 2.5** The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) notified the Council in May 2009 of its objection to the proposed designs and as a result the flood risk assessment consultant was requested to undertake further flood modelling and engineering works and report any concerns in respect of the design options and proposals for flood defence measures identified. Design work continued during this period in consultation with the client department to progress the project towards the application for planning consent stage.

3. SUMMARY OF CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1** Following a detailed review by Asset Improvement staff of a draft report from Scott Wilson (SW), the independent flood risk assessment consultants, submitted on 25 September 2009, revisions were notified to SW for them to finalise the report and submit it to SEPA. SEPA, in turn, has now made initial comments on the submission and these were returned by SEPA to SW on 16 November 2009. SW is presently carrying out additional investigations in response to the points raised. The additional data is expected to be returned to SEPA by 11 December 2009. SEPA has a statutory four week response period but SW has been tasked with following up with SEPA to improve on this.
- 3.2** The issues raised by SEPA and the consequence of having an independent consultant carry out a detailed flood risk assessment has, effectively, placed the project on hold since June 2009 as it was not considered appropriate to progress with any further detailed design work until these issues had been satisfactorily resolved.
- 3.3** Priority has been given to preparing final design proposals in conjunction with Educational and Social Services in advance of receipt of the final view from SEPA and this work is currently progressing with some urgency.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** Costs for associated flood prevention measures have been submitted within the report issued previously and are in the region of £0.200m to £0.500m depending on the final scheme implemented and are not included within the current budget of £9.600m for the project. Funding will however require to be revised once detailed designs have been finalised and tenders received.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** No legal implications are envisaged at this stage.

6. POLICY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** No policy and community planning implications are envisaged at this stage.

7. ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The impact of both the flood risk assessment and any subsequent SEPA requirements will delay delivery of the project from the timescales originally reported. These timescales cannot be determined until all issues around the FRA are fully resolved. This will be reflected in the final agreed design proposals.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.

Alex McPhee
Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management
4 December 2009

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Alex McPhee, Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management. Telephone 01563 576300. Alex.McPhee@east-ayrshire.gov.uk