

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Special Meeting of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee

Monday, 07 November 2022

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Councillor Neil Cameron, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Mrs Susan Slater, Mrs Emma Tunnard, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Bloomfield, Coull, Divers, Dunbar, Fernandes, Gatt, Gordon, Leadbitter, McLennan and Morrision

APOLOGIES

Mrs Sheila Brumby, Mrs Anne Currie, Mr Alfie Harper, Reverend Tembu Rongong, Ms Angela Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE

Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Education Resources and Communities, Head of Education, Head of Government, Strategy and Performance, Mr Hall, Senior Project Manager and Mrs Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

1 Chair

Councillor Robertson, being Chair of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee, chaired the meeting.

2 Welcome

The Committee joined the Chair in welcoming Councillor John Stuart to his first committee meeting following his election at the recent Buckie By-Election.

3 Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from Group Leaders or Spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions

taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

4 Learning Estate Strategy and Delivery Programme

Ms Tunnard joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

Under reference to paragraph 26 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 28 September 2022, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) sought a decision on the priority to be allocated to the submissions to Scottish Government for Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) Phase 3 funding in October 2022.

During her introduction, the Head of Education, Resources and Communities advised of a typing error in paragraph 4.6 of the report and confirmed that the last suitability assessment for Forres Academy had been carried out in 2017 and not 2013 as printed. This was noted.

During discussion, it was queried whether LEIP funding is awarded based on condition or suitability and in what capacity both schools had been put forward.

In response, the Head of Education, Resources and Communities confirmed that the criteria for LEIP 3 funding was measured in terms of condition or capacity and the Council could not put forward bids based on both condition and capacity. The Head of Education Resources and Communities advised that Buckie High School had been put forward in terms of capacity and Forres Academy in terms of condition however it was clear that both schools needed replaced therefore both had been put forward. Scottish Future Trust had further asked that, in the event of only one project being successful, the Council should prioritise one of the 2 schools and that is what the Committee were being asked to consider.

During further discussion, Councillor McLennan stated that, on the 27 September 2022, he had raised 30 technical questions with Officers, some of which had been responded to, and sought assurance that the suitability and condition reports had been carried out within the 5 year time frame stipulated by the Scottish Government and also in conjunction with the recently agreed Learning Estate Strategy.

In response, the Head of Education Resources and Communities advised that she had received 30 questions from Councillor McLennan to which she had responded and also confirmed that the report answered many of the questions that had been raised. She further assured the Committee that replacement schools for both Forres and Buckie would remain in the Capital Plan and that the Committee were being asked to prioritise one school in an effort to secure LEIP funding.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) further confirmed that for Buckie High School, the suitability assessment had been carried out in 2017 and the condition assessment carried out in 2021 and in relation to Forres Academy, the suitability assessment had been carried out in 2018 and the condition assessment carried out in 2021 and that suitability assessments would be carried out again for both schools in January 2023, which is within the 5 year time frame stipulated by the Scottish Government. However in terms of the criteria for the LEIP funding, each school is assessed on either condition or capacity. With regard to assessing both schools in terms of suitability, the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) assured

the Committee that, going forward, this would be addressed in accordance with the Learning Estate Strategy.

Councillor McBain was of the view that by reading the report and listening to the debate he had sufficient information to make a decision and moved that the Committee agreed the recommendations as printed within the report and that the Forres Academy Project is identified as the priority project in the LEIP Phase 3 funding bid process. This was seconded by Councillor Ross.

Councillor Warren acknowledged that both schools needed replaced however, in her view, Buckie was in a worse state of repair stating that the school was currently closed as the heating was not working. She further stated that part of the roof had blown off recently and that the building did not provide adequate protection for the pupils. Councillor Warren raised concern in relation to land ownership as the proposed land for the Forres Project was owned by the Common Good and feared acquisition of this land would cause a delay. She also stated that Buckie was to be replaced with a swimming pool included in the campus thus the overall cost of the project would be greater therefore was of the view that it would be prudent to apply for funding for the most expensive project while funding was available and moved that the Committee agree that the Buckie High School Project is identified as the priority project in the LEIP Phase 3 funding bid process. This was seconded by Councillor Macrae.

On a division there voted:

For the motion (10):	Councillors McBain, Ross, Colyer, Cowe, Harris, Keith, Lawrence, Mustard, Robertson and Williams.
For the Amendment (4):	Councillors Warren, Macrae, Allan and Cameron.
Abstentions (0):	Nil

Accordingly, the Motion became the finding of the Committee and, following on from the decision of the Council on 28 September 2022 to submit two bids for Scottish Government Learning Directorate Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) Phase 3 funding and in accordance with the bid criteria it was agreed:

- (i) to note the typing error in paragraph 6 of the report in that the last suitability assessment for Forres Academy had been carried out in 2017 and not 2013 as printed;
- (ii) that the Forres Academy Project is identified as the priority project in the LEIP Phase 3 funding bid process; and
- (iii) to recommend to Moray Council that the decision is endorsed at the Special Meeting on 7 November 2022.