

Responses to the Currie Community High School redevelopment public consultation April – May 2021

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The school site/outdoors

1. Will there be a pedestrian path/cycleway from the Currievale Drive cul de sac through to the school?

In January 2021 a draft landscape design was shared with parent council chairs and headteachers as part of an update presentation on the new school design. This was also shared on the Currie High School redevelopment page on www.edinburgh.gov.uk website to reflect the designs at that point in the project.

The pathway was originally suggested to improve cycle and walking links to the north of the Currie High School site. However, on receiving negative feedback on this suggestion the project team decided to withdraw the suggestion of a new path to Currievale Drive; instead to focus on improving the existing link through Roly's Wood. You will see in the updated landscape plans presented for the public consultation in April that no pedestrian path to Currievale Drive is shown. These plans are also available to view on the Currie High School redevelopment webpage <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/curriehighredevelopment>.

2. Can the project consider ways to improve the active travel infrastructure of the entire catchment area, in order to maximise the proportion of people who travel to the school by sustainable modes of transport?

In line with the sustainability credentials of the building, the City of Edinburgh Council wants to provide good Active Travel opportunities to the school. The Learning Estate Planning team works closely together with CEC's Active Travel team to make this a reality.

Provision for easily accessible cycle parking can already be seen on the plans for the new school and we are currently investigating how to create safe access routes to the school from the entire catchment area.

3. It would be great to see a pump track or skate park incorporated into the design.

After this was raised at the public meetings, we included a pump track and skate park in our suggestions for active play in the landscape consultation with students. There was a positive response to including a pump track at the pupil consultation. An informal track for bikes has been proposed in the landscape drawings for the planning application. This feature, along with others in the landscape proposal is subject to change during the design process.

4. Can you provide more detail about the impact of the building footprint on the viewshed and sunshade?

Architype have carried out initial solar shading analysis, as shown in the diagrams uploaded on the Consultation Hub for the public consultation. The initial analysis carried out indicates that the proposed new building results in a reduction in shading of neighbouring properties than that caused by the current school building.

5. What is the strategy behind the proposed location of the car park?

The proposed car parking to Currie Community High School is located as a direct turn left when you enter the site, and the Woodlands car park will be located further on at a right turn. This separation allows the High School car park to be constructed while the existing car park is still operational before the existing school is demolished. This is a really important factor in the phasing strategy to allow end users to safely park on site throughout the programme of works.

By locating the High School parking in this part of the site, the large area to the east of the building is freed up for spill out teaching space for CDT and for an allotment with eco exploration area for outdoor learning, both being directly accessible from teaching spaces without having to cross any vehicle routes. In addition, a space in the north-east corner of the site is made available for future community use.

The existing tree/vegetation belt along the southern boundary of the site is being maintained and supplemented where necessary. This tree belt provides a generous buffer between the site boundary and the new car park, which varies from 11m at its narrowest to over 18m at the widest part.

Woodlands School car park will be constructed at a later phase. Its location maintains the close relationship between the schools and ensures enough space is provided to cater to the requirements of its students.

6. Will the proposed new landscape be designed to promote biodiversity and pollinators?

These are key themes in the landscape design, not only in terms of current global issues, but also to create a rich learning environment for the pupils during school hours, and a valued local space outside of school hours. The design proposes a wide range of natural habitats such as ornamental planting, native woodland areas, flowering trees, hedgerow corridors, wildflower meadow zones, a pond and raingarden swales. All plant species will be chosen to promote biodiversity across all seasons and cater to a range of pollinators.

The pupils will be encouraged to participate through different spaces for outdoor learning, including growing zones and allotments.

7. What is proposed for the community allotment?

The proposal safeguards a large area in the North East corner of the site. This area will be dedicated for a community group to organise, build and run their own allotment. The current design ensures an accessible, surfaced route to the space and sufficient, safe soil is made up across the area to facilitate future growing. An orchard for the school and community is also proposed.

8. Will there be CCTV?

CCTV will be provided around the building perimeter, car park and main vehicle entrance. Internal cameras are located at the main entrance, all stairs and dining area. The final locations are all to be agreed with the City of Edinburgh Council.

Inclusion

9. How are you creating outdoors spaces that are inclusive with Woodlands School?

A strong link between the two schools is something that has been a focus of the design. A direct path connects the two buildings, ensuring pedestrian priority, visual links and a fully accessible route.

The high school's outdoor learning allotment and eco exploration zone and the entrance plaza are between the two schools for shared and collaborative use. There is an opportunity for shared use of the school's allotment and direct access from both schools to the area of community allotment. Woodlands School also maintains a direct route to the High School's sensory garden, fully accessible from the entrance plaza.

10. Will the toilets be unisex?

Toilets will be a mix of accessible, gender specific (male/female) and unisex toilets to provide choice for everyone.

11. What is the proposal for SEN provision?

Inclusion of all learners has been an important aspect of the design of the building. Accommodating different types of learning throughout has been a key focus of the design. In addition to classrooms the school will have collaborative spaces, break out and quiet spaces for independent work. An integrated support zone on the ground and first floor will include a range of facilities to support students; such as an Enhanced Support Base, Nurture, Wellbeing Hub, support for learning classroom, PSE and Sensory Room. A second and quieter entrance provides access to the integrated support zone via a sensory garden. The garden enables students to breakout into this quiet outdoor retreat; supporting mental wellbeing and tailored learning opportunities for students.

12. Are the width of corridors wide enough so that two wheelchairs can easily pass?

Corridors are generally 2.1m wide; 1.8m is the minimum width to allow two wheelchairs to pass.

13. How accessible will the sports facilities be to wheelchair users; has the pool got hoisting facilities and space for wheelchair users?

All sports facilities will be accessible to wheelchair users.

- Pool - there is an accessible changing room (including a shower) as well as a Changing Places Toilet within the pool area. A pool pod is proposed to allow dignified independent access to the pool. The space around the pool varies from 1.95m to 3m. In all locations the width is in excess of the best practice minimum widths.
- Ground floor sports facilities (sports hall and gym hall) - the sports and gym hall are located on the ground floor with level access provided. There is an accessible changing space provided within the adjacent changing area.
- First floor sports facilities (fitness suite and dance studio) - lift access is provided to the first floor (lift located near to the pool entrance)
- Outdoor sports facilities (3G pitch and grass pitches) - Level access is provided to the 3G pitch and to grass pitches. Due to the level changes on site, level access to the grass pitches necessitates a longer route than would be ideal, but this is to accommodate the existing gradient.

14. How has universal access been considered for all internal spaces?

Please refer to the answer above in relation to access to sports facilities.

The school has been carefully designed to allow the inclusion of all learners. Practical examples of design for inclusion include:

- Provision of a separate quiet entrance for students who find entering through the main entrance hub challenging
- Provision of a quiet dining space
- Provision of a range of types of teaching spaces
- Ensuring that there is suitable space and provision for wheelchair users within dining, classroom, circulation and teaching spaces
- The Learning Resource Centre and other community facilities are designed to provide universal access to a variety of different community users
- Consideration of finishes to avoid over stimulation or strobing effects, e.g. in flooring and ceiling finishes
- Provision of two changing places toilets

15. Where are the location of the changing places toilets?

There are two Changing Places Toilets; one is located within the Integrated Support Zone and one within the swimming pool changing rooms

16. Has wheelchair access to external spaces been considered?

All external spaces are accessible for wheelchair users with surfaced and level landscaping surrounding the school, avoiding any need for ramps and steps. Wheelchair access is also maintained to the more informal routes to the north of the site, through careful design of gradients and connected pathways. The active play areas and sports facilities are all designed to be inclusive, and there is also a range of more sensory spaces available to all.

17. Please detail the location and access of lifts and emergency evacuation routes for wheelchairs

There are three lifts proposed. The evacuation strategy includes a management strategy for the evacuation of wheelchair users.

Building Design

18. How has the proposed massing of the building been developed?

The building has been designed as two main wings (a teaching block and a sports facilities block) with the shared entrance hub in the middle. This arrangement of the main spaces means that the following positive aspects are achieved which support Passivhaus construction, use of the building and impact on neighbouring properties:

- The linear teaching block has north and south facing classrooms – the preferred option for maximising solar gains in winter months whilst also reducing the risk of overheating and glare
- The shared entrance space forms a clear link between the main teaching spaces and community spaces
- The lowest part of the building (the sports block) is the part that is closest to adjacent housing, minimising the impact on neighbours.

19. How will heating controls work?

The controls will work with individual room control, zonal controls and overall control of the entire building. The controls will have time, temperature and air quality sensing capability. There will be local alarms as well as remote monitoring and control information at the City of Edinburgh Council headquarters.

20. How flexible are the heating and cooling controls for the building?

The heat generated by occupants is included within the calculations of the Passivhaus Planning Package software (PHPP). Each occupied room is provided with local thermostatic control and teaching spaces have additional monitoring sensors for temperature and CO².

There are multiple circuits which will give more local adaption to temperature in that area of the school if the occupancy rises and falls. There are 10 air handling units proposed for the teaching block, giving more local control on a departmental and/or area floor basis than a couple of larger units.

Time settings are monitored to give earlier “on times” of the heating if necessary, in winter. Also, longer ventilation times can be programmed to assist with dissipating heat and CO² if necessary.

There is the facility to monitor and change the control system remotely by City of Edinburgh Council staff to change settings and to monitor temperatures and energy usage.

21. What are the proposals for heat pumps?

Air source heat pumps are the all-electric primary heating source for this project. Fossil fuels (natural gas and fuel oil) are being avoided as a heating fuel/source. Ground source heat pumps have been discounted due to installation requirements and cost.

22. How will light pollution be controlled as part of the design?

The new 3G sports pitch will be provided with LED floodlights with best in class optic for control of obtrusive light for sports and area lighting applications, the luminaires will have maximum optical efficiency and flexibility with minimum light spill. The sports pitch lighting is dimmable and multi way switched to give a set of lights to suit the function on the sports pitch; for example during a game: 100% on, during training then it could be 50% of the lights on.

The external lighting shall be controlled to respond to available daylight and programmable time scheduling.

23. Will the design of this school be Covid-resistant by being able to separate different classes to reduce disease spread in a future pandemic?

There are a number of spaces throughout the proposed design that could allow smaller groups of students to spread out for their lessons in the event of another pandemic.

- Students will have access to breakout space and open plan learning plazas allowing them to spread out
- Access to external breakout from teaching spaces allows quick and easy access to the outdoors for outdoor learning
- The outdoor learning areas have been designed to provide staff and students with the infrastructure they need to facilitate outdoor lessons easily, such as providing outdoor classroom shelters.
- Some classrooms have sliding wall partitions to open up into larger spaces and can be used to hold a socially distanced class
- There will be an additional expressive arts studio which caters to larger numbers of students in expressive arts.
- If required, the Skills Space, wellness centre, dining area, assembly hall, sports hall, gym hall and dance studio can be used to accommodate classes during a pandemic

Community Access

24. What arrangements are going to be made to ensure community activities can continue?

The work is being carried out in stages; first the 3G pitch will be developed in 2021 which will provide school and community use during the construction of the new building. The current school will remain operating as normal until the new school opens, continuing to provide its community offering which will transfer to the new school building.

25. Please ensure that there is space and resources for adult education classes

The ambition for the new school is to make it as open to the community as possible. Classrooms will be able to be booked out of school hours for adult education. Two new spaces are included in the design; the Wellness Centre and the Skills Space provide a flexible space which can be booked for a range of community uses with the potential of daytime community use.

26. Will the council timetable regular after school hours for the swimming pool?

Community access to the swimming pool will be managed by Edinburgh Leisure. The City of Edinburgh Council's ambition is to provide access to the pool for school and community use as much as possible and are working with Edinburgh Leisure to determine community hours during the day and evening.

27. How is it proposed to manage security within the main shared entrance space?

The entrance hub forms a shared space which will be used by both the school and the community. The reception area will have visual oversight of the entrance hub, as will the Facilities Management office, which is located adjacent to the main entrance. Access from the entrance hub to the pool and sports areas will be managed through the use of access control doors which can be controlled either by a fob/card or released by staff. 1.8m high 'speed gates' provide access control to the teaching block entrance.

The Project

28. What is the detailed programme for the works?

The detailed programme for the works has to be established once a contractor has been procured. The new school is targeted for opening at the start of new term August 2024 and the demolition of the old school will follow with expected completion and forming new external areas during 2025.

29. How is the new school being funded?

The school will be capital funded by the City of Edinburgh Council with funding from the Scottish Government for the operational period.

30. What is the work going to cost?

The project has still to be tendered.

31. What is the designed lifespan?

The client brief requires 60 years life for the building structure.

32. What arrangements are to be made to decant the school?

The current school will remain in operation until the new school building is complete. The students and staff will then decant into the new building.

33. Will pest control be stepped up during the construction phase?

The contractor will retain responsibility for safe management of the construction site which will include pest control for the construction site during the period of construction.

34. Concern that neighbouring properties weren't aware of plans for the school and older residents weren't able to access the internet to take part in the consultation.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic we were unable to consult in person with the community and were forced to have online consultations instead, three sessions were hosted to allow for greater choice of days and times. All homes immediately surrounding the school boundary were sent a letter in advance to advise them

of the new school building and how they can take part in the consultation either via the internet or by post if they don't have access to the internet.

35. What parking arrangements will there be to ensure that people who normally park in the school grounds can continue to do so and what arrangements are proposed for contractor parking; will people have to park on streets during construction?

74 parking spaces are being provided for the high school in front of the main entrance (located to the left on entering the campus). 50 spaces are for school staff and 24 for visitors. The parking will be a mixture of 54 standard, 8 accessible and 12 electric vehicle spaces. 2 motorcycle spaces are also being provided.

A separate car park for Woodlands School is also proposed at the east end of the campus, close to the school building. The car park will have 37 standard and 5 accessible spaces as well as a drop-off zone for 3 minibuses.

At this early stage a contractor has yet to be appointed. However, the site compound, including contractor parking, will be located within the existing school campus. Final arrangements will be agreed with the appointed contractor through a site management plan, which will form part of the formal contract.

36. Why is this school being replaced instead of refurbished, reducing funds available for other schools throughout Edinburgh and the 32 local authorities?

The project is being designed to Passivhaus standards which is a low energy and will be one of the Council's first steps towards the 2030 ambition.

The prioritisation for replacing Currie High School before other secondary schools which require investment was considered by the Education, Children and Families Committee on 21 June 2018. The report is available at the following link [Wave 4 education infrastructure prioritisation](#)

One of the main reasons for replacement is the structure of a large part of the school has reached the end of its lifespan and requires to be replaced. Maintenance has been carried out regularly when necessary. However, the building still requires to be replaced due to the lifespan issues. The capital funding from the project is from the Council's capital investment programme. The Scottish Government funding is towards future revenue costs and will be made available when the new school is operational. As such the combination of these different funding streams actually enhances the opportunity for further investment across the learning estate in Edinburgh.

37. Will the Council put in place a comprehensive planned preventive maintenance regime to ensure the building and its grounds are properly maintained throughout its lifespan?

The school has been maintained over the years. However, the school was built in 1966 and is more than 55 years old and is therefore approaching its end of life. Typically, buildings of similar design and construction as Currie High School have a Design Life of around 60 years so Currie High, even if it weren't to be replaced, would have been due a substantial capital investment in the next few years to completely refurbish the building and replace all the life expired assets. A condition survey report of Currie High School in 2020 concluded that a minimum capital investment in excess of £7M would be required to refurbish the school.

A planned preventative maintenance regime will be put in place through the building lifespan, this will be aligned to the requirement of Scottish Government.