

The City of Edinburgh Music School – is the battle o'er?

Parents of the 60 pupils at the City of Edinburgh Music School are still drawing up their battle lines to fight the council's proposals to shut the school, although The Edinburgh Reporter understands tonight that the campaign may have already been won.



We believe that both political groups which form the administration coalition, SNP and Labour, will give this matter due consideration at their group discussions next Monday. These will take place before next Tuesday's Finance and Resources Committee, and we understand that there is every likelihood that the music school will then be removed from the effect of any budget cuts.

Parents held a meeting earlier in the week to decide on tactics and actions to bring forth a deputation to the council before next week's F&R committee.

Although the council should have published the papers for this meeting they have not yet done so when we last looked. When they are available you will be able to access them [here](#).

What the parents really aim for is that the council removes the school from any mention in their budget consultation, and thus remove any risk of closure. We understand this may well

be the result of what has already been a very loud campaign.

Support has been gathered from parents of pupils at the music school and those who are at Broughton High School (of which the music school forms but a part). Parents from both camps say that having the music school sited there is of huge benefit to both sets of pupils.

Watch our interview with Lindsay Law who is heading up the action group, and others, including the former headteacher Lesley Thomson.

[City of Edinburgh Music School – parents rally against proposed closure](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

It is clear that this story gathered speed very quickly and many people connected to the CEMS wished to have their say. It also appears that the council may not legally be able to shut the school unilaterally in any case.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: “The Scottish Government highly values the role of all six centres of excellence in Scotland. Any decision by the Council has yet to enter the consultation phase and the Scottish Government will be discussing the current situation with Edinburgh Council and, in particular, Edinburgh’s role as part of a network of centres of excellence across Scotland.”

Deidre Brock MP for Edinburgh North and Leith commented: “I’m shocked to see that closure of the school is even being considered

“The proposals being put forward are short-sighted. This isn’t just an Edinburgh school, it’s a National Centre of Excellence and is funded by the Scottish Government – if the council closes the school it will lose the funding so there would be no saving from closing the school.

“The Council must change tack and give assurance that the

school will stay open and will continue to be a Centre of Excellence, providing the intensive music training that has already allowed so many pupils to hone their remarkable talents and make a career in music.

"I've written to Councillor Perry who is Convener of the Education Committee to make the case for the school and I'll continue to fight for it."

Jeremy Balfour MSP said : "I am opposed to the closure of the Music School and think the administration should withdraw their proposal immediately." He also added that he was happy to join any campaign to save it.

We interviewed Andy Wightman MSP at the weekend along with his daughter Isla Ratcliff who is a former pupil.

Here is what they said :

When the F&R committee met last week the failure to get approval for the administration's move towards public consultation was a blow.

Alasdair Rankin, Finance Convener, said at the time : "It is disappointing that the budget consultation will not go ahead on Monday October 30. We will be working hard between now and November 7 to ensure that we have a set of detailed proposals to ensure that a meaningful consultation takes place with the people of Edinburgh."

While The City of Edinburgh Music School may well be saved this time, it is of course true that the council have a very tough job on their hands knowing where to make the £23 million of savings that they need to.

You will be able to have your say in the public consultation which should open from 7 November 2017 onwards although it will run for only a month rather than the six weeks originally

planned.