

Liberton Primary School – update on repair work

by Noa Hoffman Local Democracy Reporter

A new report has revealed that it may take around a year to refurbish fire-damaged Liberton Primary School from the point when final designs are confirmed.

Liberton Primary School was damaged by fire in February, causing significant damage to a wing of the main school building where there are 12 classrooms.

Pupils who otherwise would have used the classrooms, are now being taught inside temporary units, which have been placed at the front of the school.

By the end of the month a modular village located at the rear of the school will be ready for them to move into.

The council has now revealed that the current estimate for refurbishing the damaged building is approximately 12 months from the point at which the final project is instructed.

Immediate focus for refurbishment has been to ensure the fire-damaged building is wind and watertight.

A new roof for the building is near completion and replacement windows are soon to be installed.

The scope of the proposed internal refurbishment is due to be finalised soon.

Funding for refurbishments is likely come from insurance, and as such “the overriding premise is that the refurbishment will be on a like for like basis.”

Changes to the building will be made to support modern learning practices where overall cost would not be impacted.

Ellie Weir, chair of the Liberton Primary Association, has so far been pleased with the council’s efforts to bring the school back to life.

Ms Weir said: “We were already told that it could take 18 months or two years to rebuild the school due to the procurement process, so at least 12 months is not unexpected, and sounds like things are on track. The council team were very clear in communicating timing at a whole parent meeting back in March.

“We have had two council motions passed which include the building being refurbished to 2020 standards rather than the 1950s when it was originally built. Also, refurbishments in the non-damaged parts of the school building, which were mid-way through when the fire broke out, will still be completed.

“We expect the council to continue to communicate with parents and to consult with us on design, as agreed.

“Council officers have been very good communicating with us and have listened to us. We are appreciative of all of their efforts so far.”

Education Convener, Cllr Ian Perry, said: “Not surprisingly the impact of the pandemic has meant a delay to our detailed plans for additional classrooms and refurbishment of the building damaged by the fire in February.

“As a result the modular classroom village will be ready by the end of this month and we anticipate all the related refurbishment works will take up to a full year to complete.

“The new roof is nearly completed and replacement windows are being installed so the work is progressing really well and we’re all looking forward to the new building being ready in 2021.”

Education Vice Convener, Cllr Alison Dickie, said: “I’m sure the parents and the teaching staff at the school were really relieved that everyone was back together for the start of the new term.

“After the successful decant measures the pupils would have been desperate to get back to their own school after the lengthy absence caused by the pandemic.

“Families will be pleased that Inch House will also continue to be the temporary home for the After School Club until they return to the school and I would like to thank the parents for their continued support and patience during these most difficult of times.”

Noa Hoffman is The Local Democracy Reporter covering Edinburgh. The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) is a public service news agency : funded by the BBC, provided by the local news sector, and used by qualifying partners. Local Democracy Reporters cover top-tier local authorities and other public service organisations.