

New schools will go ahead in Edinburgh

Funding for new schools at Liberton and Wester Hailes was included in an announcement by John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Education Secretary, made this morning.

The Scottish Government has included proposals for both of the new secondary schools in the latest funding round as part of potential projects for Phase 2 of their Learning Estate Investment Programme. The £1 billion programme will aim to benefit around 50,000 pupils across Scotland by the end of the next parliament and is managed on behalf of The Scottish Government by the Scottish Futures Trust.

These are only two out of 25 projects put forward for financial backing by 18 local authorities. With the replacement Currie High School this means that Edinburgh now has three new secondary schools included in the Wave 4 funding programme.

Mr Swinney said: "I am determined that our pupils have access to high-quality, up-to-date facilities that parents, staff and children can be proud of.

"This next phase builds on our commitment and proven track record in replacing schools in the poorest condition so that more children or young people can be educated in high quality buildings and ensure equity of provision.

"Scotland's construction industry has worked incredibly hard

to deal with the many challenges presented by the COVID pandemic. This funding will help the sector, sustaining many jobs and providing a welcome boost to communities across the country.

“Many of the projects will include wider community facilities and integration as part of the new school build or refurbishment. These facilities are so much more than just a school where children are educated, they are the centre piece of communities with links to the wider learning estate such as further education facilities and community libraries.”

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WHEC sits on the bank of the Canal and Liberton has green space around it

Cllr Ian Perry, Convener for Education, Children and Families at the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “Replacement of both these schools has been a top priority for the Council and today’s announcement will be really welcomed by their school communities. I’m very pleased that the Scottish Government has

recognised the strength of our bid as we're committed to building schools which provide the very best learning environment for our young people.

"Both these projects will provide us with significant opportunities to create, as part of an inclusive net zero-carbon city, community lifelong learning and sports hubs where public services can be co-located with links to active travel networks, green infrastructure and strategic public transport networks. It's a real boost for our ambitious new school building programme which will see £500m planned investment over the next 10 years and we already have a number of schools across the primary, secondary and special sectors opening in the coming year.

"We will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government, COSLA and other partners as we drive forward our plans for new school campuses that are innovatively and sustainably designed so they are inspirational places for learning for the next generation."

Cllr Alison Dickie, Vice Convener for Education, Children and Families at the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "This excellent news from The Scottish Government means we can now press on with building these much-needed new schools for Liberton and Wester Hailes. We want schools for the future that are fit for 21st Century learning and we'll continue to develop our plans so that greater accessibility for all pupils and a more inclusive environment promoting greater health and wellbeing are key to their success.

"These projects will develop excellent facilities that meet all the aspirations of the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Strategy by connecting people, places and learning, improving outcomes for all and promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It also provides us with the platform to keep progressing our ambitious plans for the enhancement of Gaelic Medium Education secondary provision in

the city. GME has grown at all learning levels, and a well-designed co-located school within a Liberton campus, would support our vision of a fully immersive environment.

“We’re committed to all our new learning estate buildings being constructed in line with our bold commitment of being carbon neutral by 2030 and designed to meet the city-wide aspirations for the curriculum to address all inclusion, digital and outdoor learning requirements and ensuring all our children have the best possible learning environment in which to flourish.”

Current schools projects under construction with their completion dates include: Frogston Primary School (spring 2021), Victoria Primary School (summer 2021), St Crispin’s Special School (summer 2021), a new primary school on Canaan Lane in south Edinburgh (end of 2021), Castlebrae Community campus (end of 2021) and Trinity Academy Phase 1 (spring 2022). The Council is also committed to building a new Currie High School by summer 2024.

Miles Briggs MSP said: “I have been campaigning for a replacement Liberton High School since my election and a new school building is long overdue.

“This is excellent news for pupils and parents at Liberton High School who have been campaigning tirelessly for a replacement building.

“What is important now is that we get a time scale for the replacement school building, so that pupils can benefit from modern state of the art learning facilities as soon as possible.

“I am pleased that Wester Hailes Education Centre, Penicuik High School, Mayfield Primary School Campus and East Calder Primary school have all been included in Phase 2 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme.”