

Planning ahead for new Liberton High School

Early plans for a new Liberton High School are to be put to the local community later this year.

The site on Gilmerton Road is set to be redeveloped as a 'community campus' complete with a new doctor's surgery and state-of-the-art sports facilities.

It could also eventually be home to the city's first Gaelic language secondary school, but plans for that are yet to be finalised.

A pre-planning application notice was submitted by The City of Edinburgh Council to the planning department on Monday for a "three storey secondary school, a GP practice and community facilities with associated landscaping, external sports provision and car parking".

It comes nearly eight years after 12 year-old pupil Keane Wallis-Bennett died after a modesty wall in a since-demolished PE changing room collapsed on her – a tragic incident which cast doubt over the structural integrity of the existing building, which opened in 1959.



Funding for the project was secured in 2020 when The Scottish Government announced £800 million investment in educational facilities and The City of Edinburgh Council listed Liberton High's redevelopment as its top priority.

A £2.25 million sports hall extension completed in 2016 would be the only part of the building to be retained, plans state.

It has also been confirmed the masterplan will include an area for a three-storey Gaelic high school.

But plans for Edinburgh's first dedicated Gaelic Medium Education (GME) facility for secondary pupils stalled recently after parents objected to the school being built on a shared campus with the new Liberton High, despite council officials saying this was the most feasible option.

A statutory consultation on the proposals put forward by education officers, which also included an option to establish

the GME high school beside Castlebrae High School site in Craigmillar, was halted after parents lobbied the council to find a suitable city centre site for a standalone Gaelic school.

At a meeting held last month the council's Executive Director of children's services, Amanda Hatton, maintained that building it alongside the new Liberton High School is still "the best option that we have educationally".

A public consultation when local residents and parents can give their views on the new Liberton Community Campus will go live on the council's website from Friday 1 April with engagement process running until 3 June.

In addition, there will be drop-in sessions at the current school building on 28 April and 4 May when specific questions posed by attendees can be answered by staff from the council and project team.

Cllr Lezley Marion Cameron, Labour Councillor for Liberton Gilmerton, said: "I'm delighted Council proposals for the much needed, long awaited new Liberton High School have reached this important stage. Our new Liberton High School will also be "more than a school" – we are creating a new community hub to improve local access to public services, in keeping with our commitment to establish 20 minute neighbourhoods.

"Detailed discussions with staff, stakeholders and strategic partners, including NHS Lothian, and Police Scotland, are underway and I'd encourage everyone – residents, community groups and service users to engage with the proposals to inform and influence what services will be accommodated within the new Liberton High School campus."

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

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