

Demolition of RAAC affected classrooms at St Kentigern's Academy completed

Demolition of the RAAC affected classrooms at St Kentigern's Academy has now been completed.

So far West Lothian Council has spent £7m on the major reconstruction project at the Blackburn high school.

But with building work expected to start by February there has been no confirmation that the Scottish Government will contribute to the final bill of £35m.

In an update to councillors on the Executive this week officers said: "It should be noted that the current estimated cost of £35 million as an overall development cost is extremely challenging and officers are continuing to work very hard with the project team appointed through Hub South East and the Tier-1 contractor to maintain that position.

"Discussions remain ongoing with the Scottish Government around funding support to deliver the works required at St Kentigern's Academy. To date, no funding support has been confirmed."

Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan said: "Can I ask if any monies have been forthcoming as yet and if the Secretary for Education has agreed to visit the school to see the work that's in progress?"

Patrick Welsh the finance director responded: "In terms of funding from the Scottish Government I can confirm there has

been no confirmation of additional funding. The council has provided updates to the Scottish Government on a regular basis in terms of progress with the project and the shortfall in funding but to this point there hasn't been any additional funding.

Dr Elaine Cook, the deputy chief executive responsible for education said: "We've had nothing from the Scottish Government in terms of asking for another visit to St Kent's".

Councillor Sullivan said: "I'd like to thank officers for their ongoing attempts to keep the situation at St Kent's under the noses of the Scottish Government. It's really disappointing that they haven't come forward with any financial support and haven't shown any interest in visiting the school. I think that's something that would be welcomed by the whole school community, the teachers, pupils and parents, and the wider community."

Demolition costs at St Kent's totalled £730,000. More than 60% of the building will be rebuilt. The £7m spent so far has gone on enabling works including the provision of temporary class room spaces.

The school has managed to maintain timetables; the major disruption has been in PE, where children have to be bussed to alternative sports venues – and in the lack of a large assembly area used for exams timetables. However the school has worked with other council venues to provide suitable exam space.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter