

By e-mail only to the Nairn Academy  
Stakeholder Group

Please ask for: Kate Lackie  
E-mail: clestates@highland.gov.uk  
Your Ref:  
Our Ref: KL/RC/1F  
Date: 15 May 2023

Dear Stakeholder

As you may be aware, the Council is reviewing the overall funding envelope for future capital investment in light of the inflationary cost increases being seen in projects across the approved capital programme and the increases in interest rates which impact on the cost of financing loan debt. The Council agreed in December 2022 that a complete review of the current programme would be needed, but that this could not be concluded until the outcomes of Scottish Government decisions in relation to the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) were known.

The Council submitted a funding bid in respect of Phase 3 of LEIP in October 2022 for five new school buildings.

- Replacement buildings for Beauuly, Dunvegan and Park Primary Schools
- A new building on a new site in Dingwall for St. Clement's School
- A new building for a new Primary School at Tornagrain

The funding model for the LEIP programme is based on Local Authorities providing the capital funding for all successful projects, with revenue funding released by the Scottish Government over a 25-year period on evidence of the achievement of a range of agreed outcomes. The Scottish Government was due to announce before the end of 2022 which projects would be included in Phase 3 of LEIP but advised on 22nd December that this would be delayed until early in the New Year.

We have regularly been seeking updates from the Scottish Government regarding the timing of the announcement and most recently, in response to a question at the Scottish Parliament on April 27th, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills advised that she was committed to announcing the successful projects by June.

As the Council has been unable to complete the review within the originally envisaged timescale, a one-year capital programme for 2023/24 was considered and approved at the Council meeting held on 2nd March. This included a commitment to

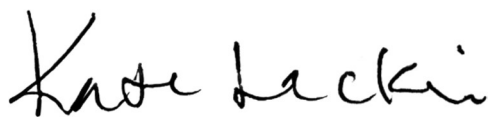
continue with design and planning work on all the major school projects included in the programme that was approved in December 2021. It is important for me to stress that no projects have been dropped from the current programme; this course of action aims to ensure that the impact on the progress of these projects will be minimised as far as possible while the review is ongoing and the outcome of our LEIP bid is awaited.

I fully appreciate the concerns and frustrations that have been expressed by some Stakeholders in recent weeks. I can assure you that the Council is continuing to work on the review and is committed to concluding this process as soon as possible. However, the overall review is inextricably linked to external funding decisions and opportunities, and requires an assessment against affordability, deliverability and impact, before decisions on the final revised programme can be made by Members.

Until the Scottish Government has announced the outcome of the LEIP Phase 3 bidding process, there is little more that can be said that is not already known. Consequently, until the outcome is announced, there are no plans to arrange further Stakeholder Group meetings, or visits by Senior Council Managers. Stakeholders will be kept fully updated of any developments as soon as we hear about them, and project teams will continue to develop the designs and engage with school staff and other user groups as required. Essential meetings to discuss funding opportunities, land acquisition and masterplan considerations will also continue as necessary in locations where additional facilities led by the community are being developed as an integral part of some projects.

Individual briefings containing specific detailed information on the status of each project will be issued to all Stakeholder Groups within one week of the date of this letter. If you have any particular deadlines, such as an upcoming Parent Council meeting, then please let us know and we will ensure that you receive the update in time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Lackie', written in a cursive style.

**Kate Lackie**  
**Chief Executive**