

10.00am, Thursday 9 February 2017

Edinburgh Schools Inquiry

Item number 5.1
Report number
Executive/routine
Wards

Executive summary

As a result of investigations following a wall collapse at Oxfords Primary in January 2016, structural issues were identified at schools built under the Public Private Partnership programme (“PPP1”) in Edinburgh between 2002 and 2005. This led to the temporary closure of affected schools and alternative arrangements for children in nearly all the schools having to be urgently put into place.

As detailed in the reports to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in May and June 2016, an independent inquiry (“Inquiry”) was instructed into this matter. Professor John Cole CBE was subsequently appointed as the independent Chair of the Inquiry and a remit for the Inquiry was agreed.

Council is requested to consider the findings and recommendations of John Cole’s Inquiry Report, which will be presented by Professor Cole to Council.

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Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - 1.1.1 note the content of this report and the Inquiry Report presented by John Cole;
 - 1.1.2 note that the Chief Executive has instructed that an officer working group be set up to consider the implications of the Inquiry Report; and
 - 1.1.2 requests an update to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee prior to the Summer recess confirming the actions that the Council is already, and will be, taking with regard to the matters set out in the Inquiry Report.

Main report

- 2.1 The Council contracted a public-private partnership with The Edinburgh Schools Partnership for the design, build, finance and maintenance of ten primary, five secondary, two special schools, a community centre and a secure unit on 14 November 2001 (known as the PPP1 project).
- 2.2 The PPP1 schools were completed between August 2002 and June 2005.
- 2.3 The reports to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in May and June 2016 set out further background to this matter.
- 2.4 On 17 May 2016, Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee agreed to instruct the independent Inquiry into this matter.
- 2.5 John Cole was appointed as the independent Chair of the Inquiry and a remit for the Inquiry was agreed with the Chair following consultation with the Group Leaders.
- 2.6 John Cole has now produced his final report and this will be presented to Council.
- 2.7 This Inquiry Report contains a significant amount of detail, including recommendations which have implications for the Council, the construction industry and public bodies generally.
- 2.8 The Chief Executive has instructed that an officer working group be set up to consider the implications of the Inquiry Report. Following consideration of the Inquiry Report, Council officers will make recommendations as to any actions to be taken as a result of the content of the report.

- 2.9 A further report will be submitted to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee prior to the Summer recess detailing the relevant findings and the actions required.

Measures of success

- 3.1 The Inquiry provides the Council with assurance as to the reasons for the unfortunate incident and identifies the lessons which can be learned or changes implemented and encourages those identified to ensure those lessons are both learned and implemented.

Financial impact

- 4.1 It is likely that the findings and recommendations of the Inquiry Report will have a financial impact on the Council. The full impact is as yet unquantified, but will become clearer following a full analysis of the Inquiry Report by officers.
- 4.2 The cost of the Inquiry to date is estimated at £200,000 which is within the budget previously advised to Committee.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 5.1 There is a risk that the issues of concern identified within the Inquiry Report could exist within other areas of the public sector, including within the Council's wider estate. A programme of inspection works is already in place to assess whether or not this is the case.
- 5.2 Although the exact impacts are yet to be fully considered, the Inquiry Report will have potentially wide-ranging effects upon Council governance processes with regard to implementing similar large projects in the future.

Equalities impact

- 6.1 There are no direct equalities impacts arising from this report.

Sustainability impact

- 7.1 There are no direct sustainability impacts arising from this report.

Consultation and engagement

- 8.1 Parents, Elected Members, the Scottish Government and various other interested parties have been kept apprised of all developments throughout the incident.

Background reading/external references

- 9.1 [Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee – 14 June 2016 – Edinburgh Schools – Independent Inquiry](#)
- 9.2 [Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee – 17 May 2016 – Edinburgh Schools - Report](#)

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

Nick Smith, Head of Legal and Risk

E-mail: nick.smith@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 4377

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Appendices