

# Portobello High School Newsletter

**1 April 2009**

Welcome to the second issue of the Portobello High School newsletter, which aims to update you on developments relating to the new school building.

This issue provides an update on the work that has been taking place since the go-ahead for the new school was given in December.

## **Funding for new school**

When the go-ahead for the new school was given, it was dependent on additional funding being found in the Council's Capital Funding. This was agreed at the Council meeting in February 2009 and this means work on the new school can begin.

## **Size of School**

A report went to the Education, Children and Families Department on 17 March about the appropriate size of the new school and it has been agreed that the school should have space for 1400 pupils. Although earlier proposals suggested that a 1200 place school would be sufficient to meet the needs of catchment families, population projections now suggest that a 1400 school will be required and the new school will be designed to take this size of pupil population into account.

## **How will the project be progressed?**

A Project Board has been set up involving senior officers from the Children and Families Department and Portobello High School. External consultants, Thomas and Adamson, have been appointed Project

Managers and they will provide regular progress reports.

In addition a User Group has been set up, again involving officers from the Children and Families Department and the school. The User Group's first task is to develop the Strategic Learning and Teaching Brief for the new school and this will build upon the early work carried out by the school community to develop the Vision Statement for the new school.

## **How will the school community get involved?**

The User Group have been asked to engage with the school community so that their views can be considered as part of the design process. Head Teacher, Peigi Macarthur, and Depute Head, John Burnside, will discuss channels of communication with the Parent Council to get their views on how best to involve parents in this process.

To support this work, the User Group have engaged educational consultant, DEGW, who will be working with staff in the school to explore their ideas for the educational vision for the new school and how they see they would like to see their 'school of the future' organised and developed.

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This will include workshops for all staff, which will be held on the May in-service days and these will be followed up with meetings with individual subject departments to explore their views in more detail.

In addition we will form a Pupil Board so that young people can be part of the planning process.

## **Design Team**

We are pleased to announce that the Design Team for the new school has been appointed and that they will be led by JM Architects. JM are award-winning Edinburgh-based architects, highly experienced in school design. They have designed and successfully completed many schools throughout Scotland over the last ten years, notably in Glasgow, Stirling and Falkirk.

The structural engineers are Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd, a large national consultancy with extensive school design experience.

Rybka are the mechanical and electrical engineers and again they have a wide range of expertise in the design of efficient systems for educational buildings.

Faber Maunsell will bring specialist skills to ensure that the designs achieve high standards in sustainability, environmental and energy efficiency.

Gardiner and Theobald are the cost advisers.

As the design work progresses there will be further opportunities for parents, students and staff to

feedback their views on the new school designs. The design process will continue until Spring 2010, when the design will be finalised and reported to the Project Board and Council.

Commenting on the Design Team, Councillor Marilynne MacLaren, Convener of Education, Children and Families said: "I am delighted that we have appointed such a high calibre design team for Portobello High School.

"JM Architects have a great track record in school design. I am pleased to hear that almost all of our Design Team are Edinburgh-based and their involvement will support our local economy at a difficult time for businesses.

"Like everyone else, I am looking forward to seeing the designs for the new school as they are developed.