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SPICe Briefing

School Buildings: Frequently Asked Questions

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This briefing gives a short overview of key facts relating to school buildings, based on enquiries frequently received in SPICe.



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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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1. HOW MANY NEW SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN BUILT AND HOW WERE THEY FUNDED?

The table below shows the number of schools built or refurbished since 1999 by Public Private Partnership (PPP) or other method¹. It is divided into three periods roughly corresponding to parliamentary terms. In total, since 1999 there have been 528 schools either built or substantially refurbished, 216 of them under PPP. Between 1999 and March 2007 there were 328 schools built/refurbished, 119 of them under PPP. In the first two years of session three, there have been 200 schools built/refurbished, 97 of them under PPP.

The following relates to the completion date and does not take account of the planning and building period which can be very lengthy. There will also be considerable variation between the scale of different projects from refurbishing a primary school to developing new build campus including secondary schools, nursery and community facilities.

Table 1: Schools built and refurbished 1999-2009

completions	PPP	Other	Total
1999 - 2002			
New Build	31	32	63
Refurbishment	26	34	60
<i>Total 99 - 02</i>	57	66	123
2003 – March 2007			
New Build	52	58	110
Refurbishment	10	85	95
<i>Total 02-March 07</i>	62	143	205
April 2007 – March 2009			
April 07 – March 08	54	43	97
April 08 – March 09	43	60	103
<i>Total April 07 – March 09</i>	97	103	200
Total schools built and refurbished since 1999			
1999 – April 09	216	312	528

N.B: Because of the way data is collected and the definitions used, individual school projects can sometimes be counted in more than one year. The table above has taken out these overlaps, and so does not match exactly the totals given in Scottish Government figures. This affects 18 schools in the 2007/08 period (6 of them PPP) and 7 schools in the 2008/09 period (non of them PPP).

Source: Scottish Parliament (2008a) S3W-9239 for 1999 to March 2007. Scottish Government (2008a) table 4 for 2007/08 and Scottish Government (2009a) for 2008/09.

2. WHAT COMMITMENTS AND TARGETS HAVE THERE BEEN FOR BUILDING SCHOOLS?

Between 1999 and 2005, the previous Scottish Executive made three commitments to building new schools. In 1999, the Scottish Executive had a target to build or renovate 100 schools by 2003 (Scottish Executive, 1999). In 2002, the Executive made a commitment to build or refurbish an additional 200 by 2006. In their review of the school estate in 2008, Audit Scotland

¹ For more detail on other methods see p.3

considered that these commitments had been met, although the report noted that it depended on the definition of substantially renovate and substantially refurbish.

In 2005, a commitment was made to 'enable the renewal of 300 schools by 2009' (Scottish Executive, 2005). This included the 200 schools in the 2002 target. In total therefore, the previous Executive made a commitment to refurbish or build 400 schools between 1999 and 2009. Audit Scotland (2008) concluded that: "current rate of building new schools alone suggests it will be achieved." By March 2007, 328 schools had been completed and since then, 97 PPP schools have been completed.

In 2007, the SNP manifesto stated that "we will match brick for brick current plans for improvements in our schools and hospitals" (Scottish National Party, 2007). In a parliamentary written answer in 2008, this was clarified as follows:

"our manifesto commitment was to match the previous Scottish Executive's planned school building programme brick for brick, by supporting the investment plans which were in place prior to the election."

The PQ went on to outline a target for 250 schools:

"We anticipate that, with the funding we have put in place, authorities will be enabled, in the context both of new build and refurbishment and through a range of funding mechanisms, to complete or have under construction around 250 schools during the current parliamentary period" (Scottish Parliament, 2008b) S3W-12578.

To date, 200 have been completed and an unknown number are under construction (see Table 1).

To summarise, targets for school building are:

- To build or refurbish 300 schools by 2006. Commitment met according to Audit Scotland.
- To renew a further 100 schools by 2009. In 2008, this was considered by Audit Scotland to be on target.
- To build or have under construction, 250 schools by April 2011. Between April 2007 and March 2009, 200 school builds and refurbishments were completed.

3. HOW ARE NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS FUNDED?

Local Authorities can fund school building in a number of ways, including:

- Prudential borrowing
- General Capital Grant
- Capital Receipts – money raised from sale of local authority assets
- Developer Contributions – where a local authority requires a school to be built as a part of a large housing development as condition of planning permission
- Traditional PPP
- Non-Profit Distributing (NPD)

3.1 Prudential Borrowing

Councils used to be subject to government controls on their levels of capital borrowing. However, the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 (asp 1) repealed the legislation containing these controls. In its place the "prudential borrowing framework" was introduced. Under this framework councils can decide for themselves how much they can afford to borrow

without having to seek permission from the Government. They do however, have to have regard to the Prudential Code developed by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA, 2004). The Scottish Government provides funds to local authorities towards the costs associated with servicing debt charges. These payments for supported borrowing came to £305.2m in both the draft budget for 2010/11 and the budget for 2009/10.

3.2 General Capital Grant

The Scottish Government contributes to a Local Authority's capital budget through making a general capital grant. In the draft Scottish Budget 2010/11 this was £360m compared with £462.6m in the 2009/10 budget (following the acceleration of £100m capital from 2010-11 to 2009-10) (Herbert and Burgess, 2009).

3.3 Traditional PPP

In a traditional PPP project the Local Authority has a contract with a 'Special Purpose Vehicle' (SPV). This is a company, with shareholders, set up expressly for the purpose of delivering the project. It will normally raise the required finance from banks or other financial institutions (usually 99%) and its own shareholders (1%)². It builds the school with this finance. Once the school is built, the Local Authority starts paying a 'unitary charge' to the SPV. This is a payment agreed at the start of the project and lasts for the length of the contract – usually 30 years. This unitary payment is the main income for the SPV and it uses it to repay its debt. It does this in a certain order: first it pays its running costs, then the 'senior', then 'junior' debt (i.e the money raised from banks) and finally, any surplus is paid to the shareholders. This may or may not be more than they originally invested.³

3.4 Non Profit Distributing (NPD)

There are different ways of developing NPDs, but like traditional PPP, a private sector company is established to raise money to build a school. Also like traditional PPP, the Local Authority pays a unitary charge over the lifetime of the contract. However, the key difference is that an NPD project does not raise money through shareholder investment. It still has shareholders, but because they have not invested money, they do not get any money repaid and so do not share in any profits made by the project. Any profits made are allocated to a charity. Although there are different models, NPD schemes tend to finance the build through lending from financial institutions.

4. WHAT CURRENT PLANS ARE THERE TO BUILD NEW SCHOOLS?

4.1 Programme for fifty five new schools

In June 2009, the Scottish Government announced plans to enable local authorities to build 55 new schools with a capital value of £1.25bn. The Government will provide £800m of this and local authorities will fund the balance. While the first schools will be funded through direct capital grant, schools in later phases of the programme might be funded by other methods such as NPD. The Scottish Futures Trust (see Question 9) will be involved in the co-ordination of the programme and this may involve collaborative work amongst local authorities (Scottish Government, 2009b).

Half the new schools will be secondaries, and these will take 90% of the funding. The first 14 schools were announced on 29 September (Scottish Parliament, 2009). The first secondary

² The proportion raised from financial institutions is separated into 'senior' and 'junior' debt. The key difference is that money raised from 'senior' debt is repaid before other debt.

³ This is a very simplified version based on a paper written for Angus Council in 2004.

schools are expected to open in 2013. The announcement of the primary schools is expected by the end of 2009 and the first primary school is expected to open by 2011.

The Scottish Government worked with COSLA, councils and the Scottish Futures Trust to identify the 14 schools. They state that they have: “taken into account the distribution of needs throughout Scotland; the best available information about schools’ condition and unsuitability to deliver the curriculum for excellence; additionality, and authorities’ plans, priorities and readiness to proceed” (Scottish Parliament, 2009).

4.2 Completion of current PPP programme

Audit Scotland stated in March 2008 that the first PPP programme contained 74 schools and PPP2, ‘over 200 schools’ (Audit Scotland, 2008). By March 2009, 216 schools had been built or refurbished using PPP/NPD (see table 1). This suggests that there may be around another 60 schools still to be completed under this programme. Three projects have still to reach financial close (i.e have contracts signed and building start). These are Moray, Orkney and Eilean Siar with estimated capital values of £50m, £50m and £52m respectively (Scottish Government, 2009c). Audit Scotland estimated in 2008 that this programme would be completed by 2012 (Audit Scotland, 2008).

4.3 Other plans

There are also schools being built and refurbished under traditional procurement (i.e capital spend and supported borrowing). However, there is no centrally collated figure for the total number or value of school projects currently being planned by local authorities. The following list of projects was provided in the infrastructure investment plan in 2008. Only the project in the Western Isles is also included in the PPP2 list.

Table 2: Local Authorities’ School Investment Plans, 2008

Local Authority	Project	Total spend £m
Angus	Seaview Primary school	5.0
Edinburgh	Wave 3 Schools	16.0
Western Isles (n.b also included in PPP list)	Western Isles Schools Project	68.0
Dumfries and Galloway	2A Schools Project	16.0
Dundee	Kingspark School	14.9
Dundee	Barnhill Primary School	5.0
East Ayrshire	New School - North	5.8
East Ayrshire	New School - Central	9.0
East Lothian	Dunbar New Primary School	10.7
East Lothian	Letham New Primary School	6.6
East Lothian	Wallyford New Primary School	8.6
Falkirk	Larbert RC Primary School	5.7
Highland	21st Century Primary Schools	16.4
Highland	Lochaber High School Refurbishment	9.2
Inverclyde	Schools Estate Developments	25.0
Midlothian	School Plus Programme	25.5
Moray	Schools Estate Upgrades	5.1

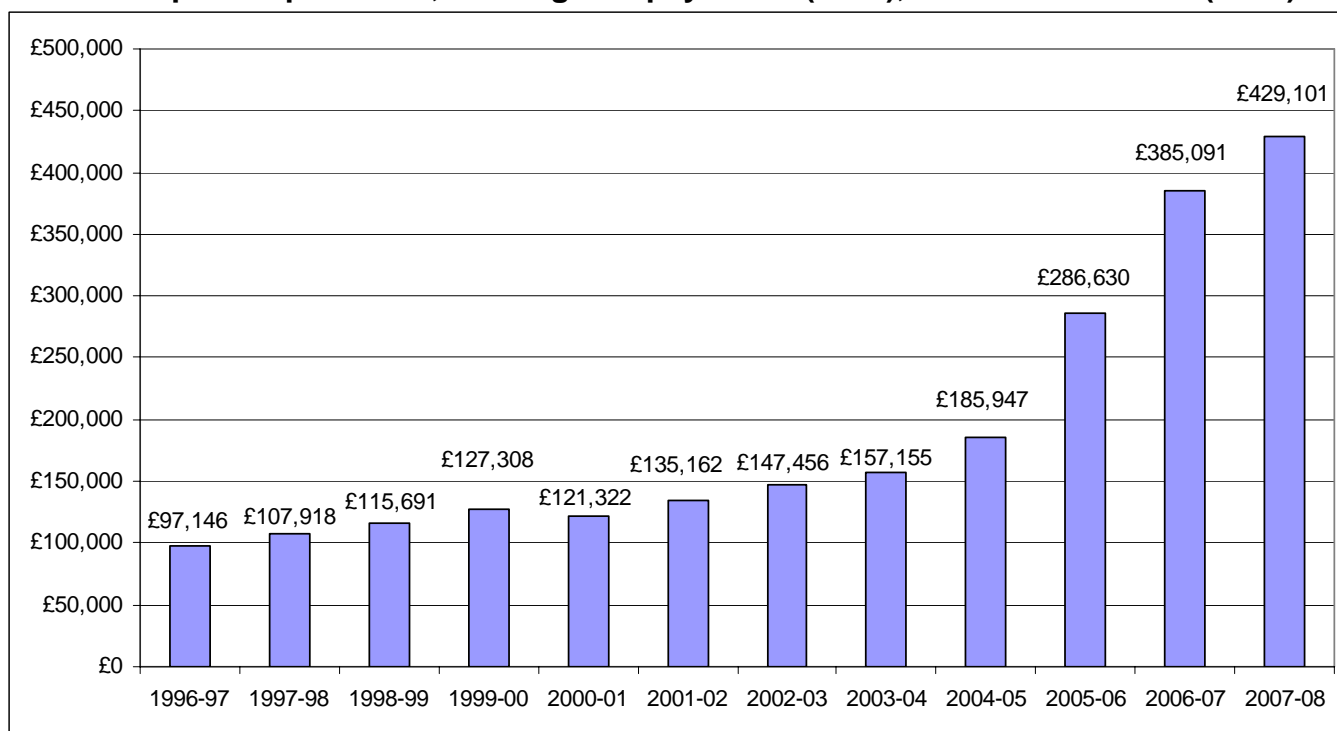
North Ayrshire	Dreghorn Primary School	9.3
North Ayrshire	Montgomerie Primary School	9.4
North Lanarkshire	Schools & Centres 21 (in progress)	23.1
North Lanarkshire	Schools & Centres 21 (forecast)	226.9
Perth and Kinross	Secondary Schools Upgrade Programme	8.2
Renfrewshire	Park Mains High School	9.5
Renfrewshire	Renfrew High School	8.8
Renfrewshire	Johnstone High School	9.4
Renfrewshire	Phase 2 Schools: Lifecycle works	10.8
Borders	Borders Primary School Project	33.2
Shetland	new Anderson High School	45.0
Shetland	new Mid Yell Junior High School	9.5
South Lanarkshire	Schools Modernisation Programme	227.9
Stirling	Schools Learning Estate	10.0
Stirling	Schools Improvement Fund	7.3
West Dunbartonshire	School Major Adaptions	9.1
West Dunbartonshire	School Major Adaptions	6.2
West Lothian	Inveralmond Community High School	18.7
West Lothian	James Young High School	18.9
West Lothian	St Kentigern's Academy refurbishment	18.4
Total		972.1

Source: Scottish Government, 2008b.

5. HOW MUCH HAS BEEN SPENT ON THE SCHOOL ESTATE?

Between 1996/97 and 2007/08 local authorities spent £2.3bn on the school estate as a whole. This includes primary, secondary and special schools and is set out in the chart below.

Chart 1: Capital Expenditure, actual gross payments (£000), 1996/97 to 2007/08 (cash).



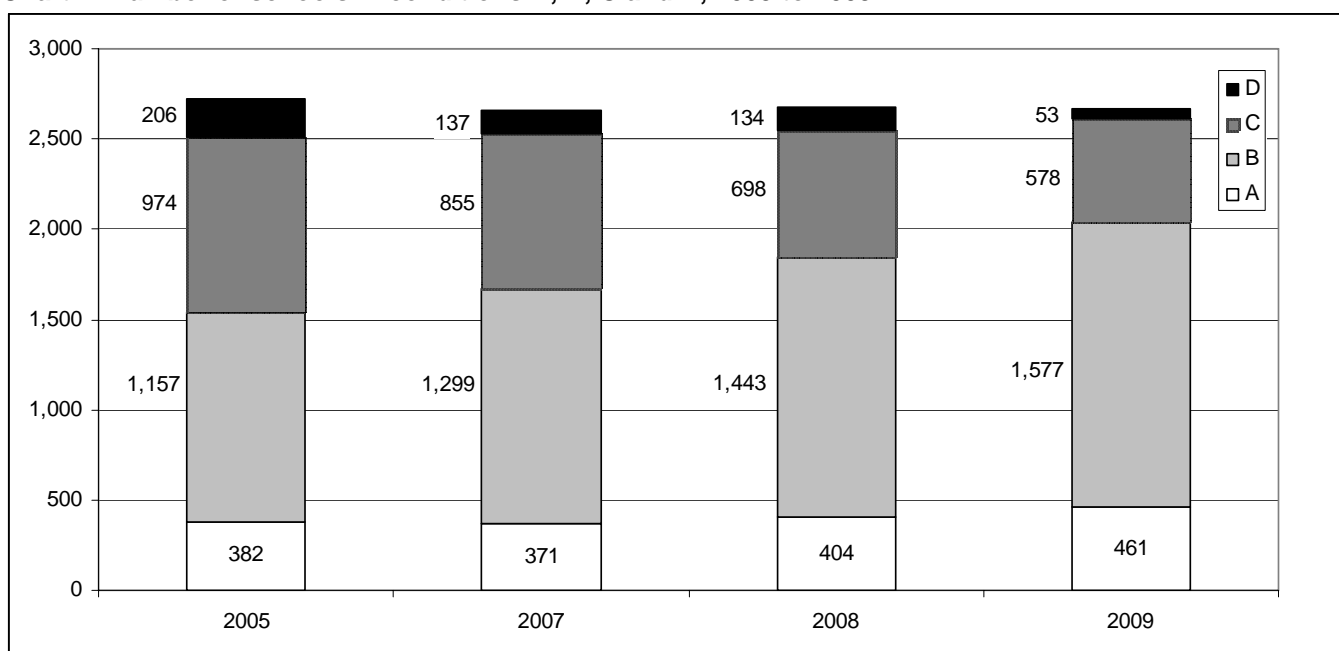
Source: Scottish Government, 2008c, Table 1.3. Does not include school estate spend funded from revenue.

In addition, the current PPP/NPD programme has a capital value of £2.8bn (Scottish Government, 2009c). Local Authorities will pay for this via the Unitary Charge over a period of around thirty years. Unitary Charges will also include maintenance and possibly other services such as catering and cleaning. The total amount of Unitary Charge paid over the lifetime of a project therefore exceeds the initial capital value of the project. In 2007/08 Unitary Charge payments were £158m (Scottish Government, 2009a, table 8). Audit Scotland estimated that annual Unitary Charge payments are likely to reach over £500m a year by 2012, of which just over £200m will be funded by the Scottish Government (Audit Scotland, 2008).

6. WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF SCHOOLS AND HOW IS THIS CHANGING?

Chart 2 below shows that the number of schools in good condition is increasing and the number of schools in bad condition is falling. School condition is divided into four categories where A is good (performing well and operating efficiently), B is satisfactory (performing adequately but showing minor deterioration), C is poor (showing major defects and/or not performing adequately) and D is bad (economic life expired and/or risk of failure). There were 79 more schools in good condition in 2009 than in 2005 and there were 153 fewer schools in bad condition.

Chart 2: Number of schools in conditions A, B, C and D, 2005 to 2009



source: *Scottish Executive, 2005b, Scottish Government, 2007, 2008a and 2009a*

7. WHICH PROJECTS HAVE USED NPD?

Six projects which were part of the Scottish Executive's PPP programme have used or might potentially be using NPD. NPD has been used in:

- Argyll and Bute
- Falkirk
- Aberdeen

It is also the model under discussion in the three projects which have yet to reach financial close. These are:

- Moray
- Eilean Siar
- Orkney

Source: *Scottish Parliament 2008c, S3W-18511 and Scottish Parliament Finance Committee 2008.*

8. WHAT IS THE CURRENT PPP PROGRAMME?

8.1 PPP1 and 2

The first schools PPP programme ran from 1998 to around 2002. There were ten projects containing 74 schools with a capital value of £535m (Scottish Government, online). A second round of PPP schools funding was announced in 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2001). This eventually involved 30 projects, a capital value of £2.8bn and contained over 200 schools. Further details on this current PPP programme are given below.

8.2 Initial Offer of Funding

In 2001 Councils were invited to bid for a share of Executive revenue funding to support school building capital projects under Public Private Partnerships. Councils were invited to make their bid in either December 2001 or September 2002. There were four announcements of successful bids:

- 15 local authorities in June 2002: Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Fife, Highland, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and West Lothian (Scottish Executive, 2002).
- 9 local authorities in March 2003: Aberdeen, Angus, Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross and Stirling (Scottish Executive, 2003).
- 4 local authorities on 1 June 2004: Falkirk, Moray, Scottish Borders and West Dunbartonshire (Scottish Executive, 2004a)
- 1 local authority on 21 June 2004: Eilean Siar (Scottish Executive, 2004b).

A project in Orkney was later added.

The initial offer of funding from the Scottish Government was based on the projects having a capital value of £2.3bn. The Scottish Executive offered to fund 80% of this and 50% of the maintenance costs. Some local authorities increased the value of their projects and are funding the difference themselves.

8.3 Value of PPP2

PPP2 consists of projects in 30 local authorities with a total capital value of £2.8bn (Scottish Government, 2009c). The capital value of projects which have reached financial close is £2.6bn, with £152m value of projects still in procurement.

8.4 Projects Signed Off Since May 2007

At May 2007 there were 11 projects still to reach financial close. Between May 2007 and May 2008, Local Authorities reached financial close on a further eight projects in the PPP programme. These contain 49 schools. The table below gives that dates of the initial offer of funding, the outline business case approval and the date of financial close.

Table 3: Projects reaching financial close since May 2007

Project Name	Date Project Publicly Announced	Date Outline Business Case (OBC) Approved	Date of Contract Signature	Number of schools	Capital Value £m
East Dunbartonshire Schools PPP	March 2003	August 2004	August 2007	6 secondary	£134.1
West Lothian Schools PPP2	June 2002	February 2006	August 2007	2 secondary	£61
Aberdeen City Schools NPD	March 2003	December 2002	December 2007	2 secondary 8 primary	£120.5
Falkirk Schools PPP2 NPD	June 2004	February 2004	May 2007	4 secondary	£115
Perth and Kinross Schools PPP	March 2003	September 2003	October 2007	9 (some joint campus)	£136
Dumfries & Galloway Schools PPP	June 2002	September 2005	January 2008	10 (some joint campus)	£109
West Dunbartonshire Schools PPP	October 2003	March 2004	January 2008	3 secondary 1 primary	£115
Inverclyde Schools PPP	June 2002	September 2004	October 2008	4 schools	£80

Source: Scottish Parliament, 2008c, S3W-18511. Information on the number of schools from Scottish Government Officials, (March 2008 for Inverclyde and May 2008 for others). Information on capital value from Schools PPP projects spreadsheet – Scottish Government, 2009c.

8.5 Projects still in procurement

The table below shows the three projects which are still in procurement. Initial offers of funding were made by the Scottish Executive in June 2004, but this will not be confirmed until the procurement process is finished i.e until they reach financial close.

Table 4: Projects still to reach financial close

Project Name	Date Project Publicly Announced	Date Outline Business Case (OBC) Approved	Date of Contract Signature	Number of schools	Capital Value £m
Moray Schools NPD	June 2004	March 2004 (original), February 2008 (updated)	n/a	Not finalised	£50
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Schools NPD	June 2004	December 2003 (updated), January 2006 (updated)	n/a	Not finalised	£52
Orkney Islands Schools NPD	November 2006	April 2007 (updated), February 2008 (updated)	n/a	Not finalised	£50

Source: Scottish Parliament, 2008c, S3W-18511/S3W-18511. Information on capital value from Schools PPP projects spreadsheet, Scottish Government, 2009c.

9. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE SCOTTISH FUTURES TRUST?

The Scottish Futures Trust is a Government-owned company set up to improve public infrastructure investment. Its current role in relation to schools involves:

- co-ordinating the £1.25bn building programme for 55 schools announced in June 2009
- working with local authorities still to complete procurement on NPD/PPP projects (Moray, Eilean Siar and Orkney), and
- assisting other local authorities with their plans for the school estate.

It is expected that the operation of the trust will contribute to attaining better value for money in school estate investment.

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