

Balerno High School responses from Questionnaire

Summary of Key Themes

1. Strong demand for rebuild or major refurbishment

- The most dominant view: the school is **outdated, worn out, and “falling apart.”**
- Many explicitly call for a **full rebuild**, often referencing newer local schools as the benchmark.
- Others would accept a **deep refurbishment**, but not minor fixes.

2. Poor condition of facilities

- Repeated concerns about:
 - **Aging classrooms (cold, poor glazing, leaks)**
 - **Toilets and changing rooms in poor condition**
 - **Old furniture (uncomfortable seating)**
- Sports facilities (especially **pool and changing areas**) seen as substandard.

3. Comparison gap with other schools

- Strong perception that Balerno is **“left behind”** compared to nearby newer schools.
- This is affecting:
 - **Student morale**
 - Sense of fairness/equality

4. Traffic, transport, and safety issues

- Major concern:
 - **School buses blocking main road (Bridge Road)**
 - Dangerous congestion at pick-up/drop-off
- Additional issues:
 - Illegal parking (zigzags, disabled bays)
 - Lack of safe crossings
 - Poor active travel infrastructure

5. Desire for better sports and community facilities

- Requests include:
 - **New/updated swimming pool**
 - **Gym (also open to public)**
 - More diverse sports (not just rugby/football)
- Strong interest in the school as a **community hub**

6. Community access and use

- Many want:
 - Facilities open after hours for:
 - Fitness classes
 - Adult sports
 - Events
- Frustration about **limited or reduced access (e.g., pool closure)**

7. Accessibility and inclusion

- Need for:
 - **Better disabled access (especially changing rooms)**
 - **Specialist provision (e.g., ASN/autism support)**

8. Environmental and sustainability concerns

- Suggestions include:
 - Energy efficiency upgrades (windows, heating)
 - Renewable energy use
 - Better maintenance culture

9. General maintenance and upkeep

- Even without rebuild:
 - Calls for **cleaning, repairs, and preventative maintenance**
- Feeling the school has been **neglected over time**

Suggested Proposals

1. Strategic Option: New Build vs Major Refurbishment

- Conduct a **feasibility study** comparing:
 - Full rebuild (preferred by majority)
 - Deep retrofit/modernisation
 - Ensure outcome delivers:
 - Modern learning environments
 - Long-term cost efficiency
 - Parity with nearby schools
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2. Transform into a “Community Hub School”

- Design or retrofit to include:
 - Public-access **gym + fitness suite**
 - Upgraded **swimming pool**
 - Multi-use sports halls
 - Operate with:
 - Evening/weekend access
 - Community programming (classes, clubs)
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3. Transport & Safety Redesign

- Create a **dedicated off-road bus hub** (key priority)
 - Introduce:
 - Safer drop-off zones
 - **Enforced parking controls**
 - Pedestrian crossings / lights
 - Expand:
 - Walking & cycling infrastructure
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4. Facilities Upgrade Package

Whether rebuild or refurb:

- Modern classrooms (warm, ventilated, flexible)
 - New furniture (ergonomic seating)
 - Upgraded:
 - Toilets
 - Changing rooms (inclusive + accessible)
 - Science labs & tech spaces
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5. Sports & Wellbeing Investment

- New or upgraded:
 - Swimming pool
 - Gym (dual school/community use)
 - Multi-sport facilities beyond rugby/football
 - Add:
 - Outdoor learning spaces
 - Wellbeing/mental health areas
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6. Accessibility & Inclusion Improvements

- Fully accessible campus design
 - Dedicated **ASN/specialist support facilities**
 - Inclusive changing and learning environments
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7. Sustainability Plan

- Replace single glazing with efficient systems
- Introduce:
 - Renewable heating (e.g., heat pumps)
 - Energy-efficient lighting
- Embed sustainability into learning spaces

8. Maintenance & Management Reform

- Implement:
 - **Planned preventative maintenance programme**
 - Regular condition audits
- Improve:
 - Responsiveness to infrastructure issues

9. Capacity & Future-Proofing

- Ensure school is:
 - Large enough for future population growth
 - Flexible for evolving curriculum (vocational + digital + practical skills)

Bottom Line

The feedback is unusually consistent:

➔ **This is not a “minor upgrade” situation.**

➔ The community expects either a **new school** or a **transformational overhaul**, combined with safer transport and stronger community integration.