

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	8 September 2022
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	School Estate Plan 2022
REPORT NUMBER	RES/22/184
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the finalised School Estate Plan for committee approval. The plan (included at Appendix 1 of this report) sets out the recommended actions to be undertaken to develop the school estate over the next ten years and beyond, supporting the delivery of the Council's Property and Estates Strategy and the National Learning Estate Strategy. Each of the recommendations within the report are referenced by a letter and number, which refer to section 4.1 of the Estate Plan "Objectives & Recommendations". Annex A of the Estate Plan provides a summary of the school estate review findings and the context for these recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

City-Wide / Strategic

- 2.1 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to adopt an approach which favours the improvement and repurposing of existing assets, over the construction of new school buildings, where this is appropriate, and to ensure that where new school buildings are required, these are designed from the outset, to comply with the low carbon criteria set out within the Learning Estate Investment Programme, and where appropriate, with the Net Zero Public Sector Buildings Standard. (Recommendation A1)
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that all new primary schools are designed with a minimum pupil capacity of 434, and all new secondary schools are designed with a minimum pupil capacity of 1000, in order to support high quality learning and teaching. (Recommendation A2)
- 2.3 Notes that potential changes in pupil population across the city are likely to require a reduction in the number of operational schools over the next 10 years, and that within this and future editions of the School Estate Plan, officers will bring forward specific options and recommendations for making

changes to the school estate to ensure optimum efficiency and sustainability of the estate as a whole. (Recommendation A3)

- 2.4 Notes that where appropriate, officers will seek opportunities to make use of available capacity within schools for other purposes, including the delivery of additional services, in order to make efficient use of available space within the estate which also benefits local communities. (Recommendation A4)
- 2.5 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a review of signage in all schools and upgrade / replace signage where required to improve accessibility for all users and agrees to refer this to the budget process. (Recommendation A5)
- 2.6 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to present a delivery plan for implementing the agreed actions in this report to the next meeting of the Education and Children’s Services Committee, and thereafter, to present an annual update to the School Estate Plan to the Education and Children’s Services Committee, commencing from September 2023, to report on progress with the agreed actions and to update these as appropriate, in light of the most recently available data. (Recommendation A6)

Denominational Primary Schools

- 2.7 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for ensuring appropriate and sustainable long term denominational primary school provision for the city to meet forecast demand, and report back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee with recommendations. (Recommendation RC1)

Secondary Schools in the North of Aberdeen

- 2.8 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for reducing the predicted long term excess secondary school capacity in Grandhome, Oldmachar and Bridge of Don, and report back with an outline business case for consideration by the Education and Children’s Services Committee. (Recommendation NA1)
- 2.9 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for ensuring appropriate long term secondary school provision for Bucksburn and Dyce, and report back with an outline business case for consideration by the Education and Children’s Services Committee. (Recommendation NA2)

Schools in Central Aberdeen

- 2.10 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and options appraisal to improve the suitability,

accessibility and capacity levels of Victorian schools within Aberdeen City, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations and estimated costs. (Recommendation CA1)

Bucksburn Associated Schools Group

- 2.11 Notes that officers have completed a feasibility study on the proposed permanent extension to Bucksburn Academy, and instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the Finance and Resources Committee with an outline business case for consideration. (Recommendation B1)
- 2.12 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to engage with developers to track progress with the Bucksburn / Newhills developments, in order to determine options and appropriate timing for new primary school provision to serve the new housing developments, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with an outline business case. (Recommendation B2)

Oldmachar Associated Schools Group

- 2.13 Notes that officers are currently engaging with developers to track progress with the Grandhome development, to determine any requirements for new primary school provision and to relieve forecast pressure on pupil numbers at Forehill School. (Recommendation O1)
- 2.14 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a statutory consultation on proposals to re-align primary school zone boundaries within the Oldmachar ASG, to relieve future pressure on pupil numbers at Greenbrae School, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with the outcomes of the consultation and recommendations as appropriate. (Recommendation O2)
- 2.15 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for reducing the number of primary schools in the Oldmachar ASG, in order to minimise potential excess pupil capacity, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee as appropriate. (Recommendation O3)

Bridge of Don Associated Schools Group

- 2.16 Notes that officers will continue to monitor forecast rolls at Braehead School and Scotstown School, and that any required actions will be reported in future updates to the School Estate Plan. (Recommendation BD1)

St Machar Associated Schools Group

- 2.17 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out an options appraisal on potential uses of the additional capacity to be provided by the

new school at Tillydrone, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations as appropriate.
(Recommendation S1)

- 2.18 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to consider the options for relocating other services accommodated within the Sunnybank School building, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations. (Recommendation S2)
- 2.19 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study to consider the options for the removal of unused modular classroom buildings at St Machar Academy, and for carrying out general improvements to the outdoor space at the school, and to present a costed outline business case to the Finance and Resources Committee for consideration. (Recommendation S3)

Northfield Associated Schools Group

- 2.20 Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Westpark School and Heathryburn School, considering the likely long term impact of the planned new Greenferns development, and that recommendations as required will be included in future updates to the School Estate Plan.
(Recommendation N1)
- 2.21 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for reducing the number of primary schools in the Northfield ASG, in order to minimise excess pupil capacity, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations as appropriate.
(Recommendation N2)

Hazlehead Associated Schools Group

- 2.22 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to assess the feasibility of creating new secondary school provision to serve the communities of Hazlehead and Countesswells, to put this forward to the Scottish Government as a priority project for funding in Phase 3 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with an update on the outcomes of the funding bid and recommendations on next steps. (Recommendation HH1)
- 2.23 Notes that officers will continue to monitor the situation with the housing development at Countesswells and will bring forward recommendations as appropriate regarding requirements for additional primary school capacity to serve the development, in future annual updates to the School Estate Plan.
(Recommendation HH2)
- 2.24 Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Hazlehead School and will include any required recommendations for action in future updates to the School Estate Plan. (Recommendation HH3)

- 2.25 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a further statutory consultation on the creation of a school catchment zone for Gaelic Medium Education provision at Hazlehead Academy. (Recommendation HH4)

Aberdeen Grammar Associated Schools Group

- 2.26 Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Aberdeen Grammar School and will include any required recommendations for action in future updates to the School Estate Plan. (Recommendation AG1)
- 2.27 Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Mile End School, and include any required recommendations in future annual updates to the School Estate Plan. (Recommendation AG2)
- 2.28 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a further statutory consultation on the creation of a school catchment zone for Gaelic Medium Education provision at Gilcomstoun School. (Recommendation AG3)

Harlaw Associated Schools Group

- 2.29 Notes that officers are progressing plans to commission a review of sports facilities at Harlaw Road and Rubislaw, to allow Harlaw Academy to use the facilities for its off-site PE provision, and that the outcomes of this review with any relevant recommendations will be reported in future updates to the School Estate Plan. (Recommendation H1)
- 2.30 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study to identify potential future options for improving the condition and suitability of the Harlaw Academy building, and to report back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee with recommendations and costs. (Recommendation H2)
- 2.31 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study to identify potential options for improving the dining capacity, layout and ELC facilities at Ferryhill School, and to report back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee with recommendations and costs. (Recommendation H3)

Cults Associated Schools Group

- 2.32 Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Cults Academy, and include any required recommendations in future annual updates to the School Estate Plan. (Recommendation C1)
- 2.33 Notes that officers will monitor pupil numbers and use of space at Culter School, and consider options for alternative use of any available space, with

any recommendations to be included in future updates to the School Estate Plan as appropriate. (Recommendation C2)

Lochside Associated Schools Group

- 2.34 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for creating the required additional school capacity to serve the planned Loirston Loch development, and report back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee with recommendations as appropriate. (Recommendation L1)
- 2.35 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a statutory consultation on proposals to relocate Walker Road School to the new primary school building in Torry, following its completion, and to report back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee with the outcomes of the consultation and recommendations as appropriate. (Recommendation L2)
- 2.36 Notes that the Tullos Playing Fields Pavilion building will be declared surplus to requirement within the school estate, to allow options for its future use or disposal to be considered, under standard vacant property procedures. (Recommendation L3)

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 At its meeting of 3 March 2021, Council agreed to “note the process and timeline required to be followed in delivering the School Estate Plan, and to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to present the finalised School Estate Plan to the Education Operational Delivery Committee in Summer 2022, in line with this timetable.”
- 3.2 At its meeting of 14 June 2022, the Education Operational Delivery Committee agreed to note “that that there was unprecedented uncertainty and market fluctuation in relation to construction costs and energy costs, and uncertainties relating to school roll forecasting following changes in patterns of school enrolment have led to challenges in providing an accurate and robust set of recommended actions within the School Estate Plan.”
- 3.3 Following a further detailed review of the recommended actions over the summer in light of the above uncertainties, an updated School Estate Plan is now presented to the Committee for approval.
- 3.4 The full School Estate Plan 2022, at Appendix 1 of this report, provides the outcomes of a review of the existing school estate and identifies short, medium and long term priorities for developing the estate in the future, across the city and in each of the city’s associated schools groups (ASGs).
- 3.5 Addressing the priorities identified within the plan will help to bring about a range of benefits for the children and young people of Aberdeen City, including:
- Improved educational experiences

- Higher levels of attainment and improved educational outcomes
- Access to supports to help close the poverty related attainment gap
- Access to family-centred services across the city

- 3.6 Whilst the current school estate as a whole generally meets overall demand for pupil places across the city, changing demographics in Aberdeen mean that we no longer necessarily have schools in the right places. Schools in some parts of the city where pupil populations are falling, are operating significantly under capacity, whilst in other areas the demand for school places is rising, and schools are over-subscribed.
- 3.7 School roll forecast data indicates that this pattern is set to continue, and the Council will therefore be required to make some key decisions in the coming months and years about its school estate, to create new capacity where there is a need, and to consider rationalising schools where places are no longer required, to ensure that the estate continues to operate as efficiently as possible whilst supporting the delivery of high quality learning and teaching.
- 3.8 The School Estate Plan includes details of identified priorities for individual schools, ASGs, and at a wider area level across the city, and sets out a range of proposed actions to be taken in the coming months and years to address these priorities, which are recommended for committee approval.
- 3.9 Rather than being seen as a static document, the intention is for the School Estate Plan to continually evolve, with a recommendation that updates should be provided to committee members annually.
- 3.10 The School Estate Plan outlines officers' planned approach to continually engage and consult with stakeholders and local communities from an early stage, to gather feedback from stakeholders on the priorities and actions which require to be taken in individual localities, and in turn to develop and improve the school estate in a way which best meets the needs of the people it is there to serve. Engagement with children and young people will be a key aspect of this approach, given that the decisions which will ultimately be made to address the priorities highlighted in this report, are likely to directly affect their lives.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Additional resources will be required, to create capacity within the Corporate Landlord and Capital clusters, to carry out the recommended actions included within the School Estate Plan, should these be approved. Additional staffing within the School Estate Team will be required in order to manage the required community engagement and consultation activity, along with a requirement for additional technical resource to undertake detailed feasibility studies.
- 4.2 To fully complete the recommended actions within two years, the estimated costs are as follows:

Cost for technical resource to deliver feasibility studies (5-6 studies per year @ £40k per study):	£220k per year
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Additional staffing costs for drafting proposals, undertaking community engagement and consultation, and evaluating and reporting on the outcomes of these (1FTE Project Officer at Grade 14 + 0.4FTE Support Officer at Grade 9, including on-costs)	£73k per year
Total cost over 2 years:	£586k

4.3 The above costs will be met through the Contingency budget within the reprofiled General Fund Capital Programme.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that it shall be the duty of every education authority to secure that there is made for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education.

5.2 Section 17 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that it shall be the duty of an education authority in the performance of their functions under sections 1 to 6 of the Act, to provide for their area, sufficient accommodation in public schools and other educational establishments under their management to enable them to perform their said functions. In addition, an education authority shall maintain and keep efficient every public school, and other educational establishment under their management, and shall from time to time provide such additional accommodation as may be necessary to enable them to perform their functions under the Act and may, provide, alter, improve, enlarge, equip and maintain schools and other educational establishments within their area.

5.3 The identified priorities for developing the school estate outlined in the draft School Estate Plan are in fulfilment of the above duties incumbent upon the Education Authority.

5.4 A proposal to make changes to a school, including closing, relocating or opening a school, is subject to consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Formal consultations will require to be carried out for any proposals to make these types of changes to schools, and consideration of this has been given in the recommendations arising from the School Estate Plan.

5.5 The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 requires local authorities to prepare and keep under review an accessibility strategy for increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum; improving the physical environment of schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability are able to take advantage of education and improving communication with pupils with a disability. In taking account of the Accessibility Plan, the School Estate Plan assists the Education Authority to realise these statutory aims.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The School Estate Plan outlines the approaches which will be taken to bring about positive impacts on the environment in the future, through reducing carbon emissions from the existing school estate and from future new build schools to contribute to the Council's net zero carbon ambitions, and through ensuring improved resource efficiency by rationalising the school estate where appropriate.
- 6.2 All new build and refurbishment projects are compliant with the Council's Building Performance policy, and through the location and design of new buildings we will seek to promote active and sustainable travel to school.
- 6.3 Designing new schools for the future presents opportunities to make positive impacts on other aspects of the natural environment, including, for example, making space for nature through sustainable approaches to landscaping, avoiding over-use of synthetic materials in school grounds, and providing space for food growing initiatives. Officers will continue to work closely with colleagues in Environmental Planning when designing new and refurbished outdoor spaces, to ensure consideration is given to these important factors.
- 6.4 However it is also recognised that carrying out physical changes to the school estate, such as removing surplus capacity or constructing new buildings, could potentially result in a negative impact on the environment, for example through disturbance to habitats and roosting animals, or affecting existing open spaces. Any such activity will be planned carefully to minimise any such negative impacts wherever possible.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			
Compliance	(1) Failure to plan effectively for the school estate, leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate and efficient provision	(1) The School Estate Plan sets out priorities for the school estate and proposals for continually monitoring and updating plans to ensure adequate and efficient	L	Yes

	(2) Failure to consult formally with stakeholders on changes to schools would be in breach of legislation	provision is maintained (2) Any proposed changes to schools arising from the School Estate Plan will incorporate full statutory consultation to ensure compliance with legislation		
Operational	(1) Failure to engage and consult with communities on the future of the school estate which serves them, could lead to a breakdown in relationships with community members. Some proposals about the future of the school estate may not be popular with some stakeholders (2) Uncertainties in school roll forecasting due to increases in overseas students moving to Aberdeen with families, and future requirements to accommodate international refugees, could lead to lack of capacity in some schools	(1) The School Estate Plan emphasises a renewed approach which places community engagement and consultation at the centre (2) Officers will meet regularly with universities to understand their plans for recruitment of international students and to assess likely impact on demand for school places. Housing for refugees will be matched as far as possible to available school capacity in each are of the city, to avoid schools becoming over-subscribed	M	Yes
Financial	Failure to take account of recent increased	Recommendations within this report have been reviewed	M	Yes

	<p>construction costs and recent changes to patterns of enrolment could lead to the wrong decisions being taken, leading to unnecessary costs for the Council.</p>	<p>to take account of recent increased costs and uncertainties in the construction market and with patterns of enrolment, as far as possible. The situation will be continually reviewed, and where there is a requirement to update or make changes to recommended actions, these will be reported to the committee.</p>		
Reputational	<p>Failure to engage and consult with communities on the future of the school estate which serves them, could lead to reputational damage for the Council. Some proposals about the future of the school estate may not be popular with some stakeholders</p>	<p>The School Estate Plan emphasises a renewed approach which places community engagement and consultation at the centre</p>	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	<p>Development of the school estate and the addition of new school capacity may lead to increased carbon emissions</p>	<p>Climate risks and the need for the school estate to contribute to the Council's net zero carbon emissions targets will be embedded into planning and decision making.</p>	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<p>This report supports the delivery of the following policy statements:</p> <p><u>A City of Opportunity</u></p> <p>Policy Statement 2 - Review and invest in our school estate, ensuring all of Aberdeen's schools are fit for the educational needs and the challenges of the 21st century. The report seeks Committee's approval of the School Estate Plan.</p> <p><u>A Prosperous City</u></p> <p>Policy Statement 8 - Seek to buy goods, services and food locally whenever possible, subject to complying with the law and public tendering requirements. Opportunities to do this will be considered for all Capital Projects.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of Stretch Outcome 8 in the LOIP – Child friendly city where all decisions which impact children and young people will be informed by them by 2026. The School Estate Plan sets out how all stakeholders including children and young people will be consulted on proposals to make changes to the school estate.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of Stretch Outcome 13 in the LOIP – Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate. The School Estate Plan sets out the approach which will be taken to reduce carbon emissions from the school estate.
Regional and City Strategies	The School Estate Plan will support the delivery of the Council's Property and Estates Strategy (currently in draft).

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	No other assessments required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Council, 3 March 2021: [Printed Decisions](#), Page 9
- 10.2 Education Operational Delivery Committee, 14 June 2022: [Printed Decisions](#), Page 2

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 : School Estate Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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