

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE:	<b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>
DATE:	<b>2 June 2011</b>
DIRECTOR:	<b>Annette Bruton</b>
TITLE OF REPORT:	<b>Provision for children with additional support needs arising from complex factors – Progress Report</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/11/043</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is:

- To update members on progress with the proposed School Campus for children with severe and complex needs.
- To seek members endorsement for the proposed way forward for services for children with severe and complex needs.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the members of the Committee:

- (i) note the wishes of parents/guardians, and the new information brought forward by officers, following discussions with NHS Grampian about the future of the Raeden site;
- (ii) endorse the actions taken since the last meeting of the Committee, and the proposed way forward for services for children with severe and complex needs.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 At its meeting in June 2009 the Resources Management Committee approved funding for the proposed new school campus for children severe and complex needs, at an estimated cost of £16,675,000 to be spread over five years. This was on a clear understanding that this cost would be offset against ongoing revenue savings associated with: rationalising Hazlewood, Woodlands and Raeden schools into one new school; the costs associated with supporting children with disabilities in out of authority placements; and the potential capital receipts from the sale of the Hazlewood site.

- 3.2 The annual property running costs of the three schools was in excess of £3.2 million, (based on 2007/08 costs), and planned maintenance costs for Hazlewood and Woodlands Schools over the next 4 – 6 years were predicted to amount to £2,068,625, based on information from condition surveys of both buildings.
- 3.3 Separate from the construction costs for the new school campus on the Raeden site, it was anticipated that there would be costs associated with moving the nursery from the current site to the temporary site at Braeside School and then back into the new school and to move equipment into the 3 new local developmental nurseries. In addition, there will be refurbishment costs at Ashgrove Children's Centre. The Corporate Asset Group is currently reviewing the possible funding of these works, which it is anticipated should amount to no more than £175K, and if necessary this issue will be reported to the next Finance & Resources Committee.
- 3.4 In line with the decision of the Resources Management Committee in June 2009, funding for the new complex on the Raeden site, at an estimated cost of £16.675 million was built into the indicative non-housing capital programme, to be spread over five years. Since that decision, the capital programme has been reviewed in line with the reduced available capital and this project was not able to be supported within the 2011/12 programme. Officers were however instructed to explore alternative funding options for the project.

#### **4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 4.1 This proposal fits with the vision in the Community Plan to develop Aberdeen as a 'City of Learning'. It also links to the priorities set out in Vibrant Dynamic and Forward Looking Manifesto commitments to: ensure Aberdeen's pupils and teachers have school buildings fit for 21st century; ensuring expenditure on education delivers maximum benefit to pupils' education; continue to involve parents and pupils in their schools; ensure education is appropriate to pupils' needs; allocate additional resources to support for learning, target areas of greatest need; continue work to raise the achievement of vulnerable children and close the attainment gap across the city and make greater provision within the city for young people with additional needs to avoid placements out of the area.
- 4.2 It relates to the requirement to report in the Single Outcome Agreement in particular Priority 5 - Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed; and Priority 8 - We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

#### **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 It is proposed that the new locally based developmental nurseries will be established by August 2011. The aim will be to minimise the disruption to any children currently attending the pre-school nursery at the Raeden

Centre, and to ensure we are able to offer new children places in the locally based special needs nurseries or in the full day care provision being commissioned from the voluntary sector.

- 5.2 There will be property implications as a direct result of this report. No construction work will be required at Kaimhill Primary, though minor changes will be required to the accommodation at Seaton School. Refurbishment work is required at Ashgrove Children's Centre to improve accessibility.
- 5.3 There will be implications for Information Technology, Human Resources, and Facilities Management and these will be reported to committee at a future date.

## **6 REPORT**

- 6.1 At the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 24 March 2011, members considered the outcome of the statutory consultation, and agreed in principle to the closure of Raeden Nursery and the allocation of children to the three proposed developmental nurseries and the temporary decant of children to the former Braeside School. This was to enable the construction of the new school campus on the site of the Raeden Centre, subject to the approval of the business case by Finance and Resources Committee.
- 6.2 In addition, the Committee instructed officers to complete a full business case for the development of the new school campus on the site of the existing Raeden Centre, to be considered by Finance and Resources Committee for a decision on the proposed funding methodology.
- 6.3 Following the Committee's endorsement of the outcomes of the statutory consultation process, officers sent the full report to the Scottish Government for their consideration, in line with the guidance contained within the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 6.4 On 3 May 2011 the City Council received official confirmation from the Scottish Government that they had received no representations in relation to the proposals. They confirmed that, 'the Scottish Ministers consider that Aberdeen City Council has fulfilled its obligations under the 2010 Act and therefore do not intend to issue a call-in notice in respect of the decision', (see Appendix 1).
- 6.5 In relation to the funding for the new School Campus on the Raeden site, the Finance and Resources Committee on 21 April 2011 agreed that the Head of Asset Management and Operations should complete a detailed business case, in order to determine the financial viability of any proposals. Officers were also instructed to consider various funding arrangements, and report back to the next meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee on the outcome of this work.

- 6.6 Since these meetings, staff from Raeden Nursery have been in discussion with parents and guardians of current and prospective pupils to establish the most appropriate provision for their children for the new school session starting in August 2011.
- 6.7 In relation to the future of the Raeden Centre, NHS Grampian has confirmed that, as planned, they are entirely vacating the Raeden Centre from the end of June 2011. This results from the planned service redesign undertaken by NHS. This redesign has already been consulted on and agreed. Should Aberdeen City Council wish to carry on operating the Raeden Nursery from the Raeden Centre, we would take on sole responsibility for all costs associated with the operation of the building, including facilities management, health and safety, legionella testing, together with a backlog of repair and maintenance work.
- 6.8 Whilst NHS Grampian have confirmed that they are happy if the City Council wishes to continue to use the building, this is potentially a very expensive option, given the small number of pupils involved, and officers feel is unlikely to serve the best educational needs of the children, or provide the opportunities for integration with mainstream children offered by the developmental nurseries option.
- 6.9 Furthermore, feedback from recent meetings and visits to the developmental nurseries has been very positive, and both parents and staff can see the advantages that the developmental nurseries offer, not least the opportunities for integration with mainstream children.
- 6.10 As a result, the majority of children have now been placed in one of the three developmental nurseries, at either Ashgrove Children's Centre, Kaimhill or Seaton School.
- 6.11 The Head Teacher has therefore been in discussion with the families of the remaining four children, and has agreed that places can be provided in Seaton School, where, subject to some minor alterations to the proposed accommodation, there is capacity to accommodate the children.
- 6.12 Given the planned relocation of children to the developmental nurseries from August 2011 and the proposal to set up provision at Seaton School. There is no longer the requirement to keep the nursery provision operating at the Raeden Centre, or to relocate the provision to Braeside School, as originally envisaged.
- 6.13 Business Case - in relation to developing a business case to support alternative sources of funding for the new School Campus on the Raeden site, officers are working to develop detailed proposals. It is anticipated that officers will have sufficient information in time to report to the next Finance and Resources Committee on 16 June 2011.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Review of the Provision for Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs Arising from Complex Factors June 2007

Brief for a New Specialist Facility for Children with Additional Support Needs Arising from Complex Factors October 2008

Review of Long Term Health Provision by NHS Grampian for Selected Categories of Children with Disabilities and Complex Needs (NHS Grampian 2003)

Review of Pre-school Services in Aberdeen City for Children with Special Needs (NHS Grampian and Aberdeen City Council 2004)

Aberdeen City Council's Nursery Admission Policy

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000

Early Years Framework 2008

Report and minutes of reports to the following Committees:

- Policy and Strategy (Education) Committee on 3 March 2009
- Resources Management Committee on 16 June 2009
- Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 16 September 2010
- Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 24 March 2011
- Finance and Resources Committee on 21 April 2011

## **8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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3 May 2011

*Dear Annette,*

I refer to David Wright's email of 28 March 2011, to inform the Scottish Ministers that Aberdeen City Council took the decision on 24 March 2011 to close Raeden Nursery School, Hazelwood School and Woodlands School, as part of the Council's redesign of ASN provision.

As is required under section 15 (4) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (the 2010 Act), a three week period was allowed, which expired on 13 April 2011, for anyone to make a representation to the Scottish Ministers requesting that the decision should (or should not) be called in by them. No such representations were received in relation to the decision to close these education facilities.

After carefully considering the information provided by your Council, I can confirm that the Scottish Ministers consider that Aberdeen City Council has fulfilled its obligations under the 2010 Act and therefore do not intend to issue a call-in notice in respect the decision. Aberdeen City Council therefore now have Scottish Ministers' consent to close Raeden Nursery School, Hazelwood School and Woodlands School in line with the specific proposal to develop the Raeden Development Campus.

*Yours sincerely,*

**JULIE HUMPHREYS**  
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