

Strategic Outline Case

Project Name	Northfield Area Asset Review		
Sponsoring Cluster	Corporate Landlord		
Senior Responsible Officer	Stephen Booth		
Gateway Review by Sponsoring Cluster The Sponsoring Cluster must confirm their support for the project and, crucially, have the resources necessary to deliver the project to conclusion.	Strategic Outline Case agreed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Project scope modified – further options?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Pilot exercise to test assumptions	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Postpone or abandon	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

[Find further guidance in the ACC Project Management Toolkit online](#)

The Strategic Outline Case template should be used for projects expected to cost over £250,000.
 For projects expected to cost up to £250,000, please use the [Project Proposal template](#).

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1. Project Overview

Briefly describe the basic project concept.

It is proposed that a detailed review of Council owned non-domestic assets within the Northfield area should be undertaken, to identify opportunities for consolidation of assets, to help reduce costs, and improve Council services to the area.

The review will follow on from a feasibility study undertaken in 2023, which focused on the primary schools within Northfield and the potential for reducing excess pupil capacity within these. The feasibility study did not lead to any conclusive recommendations, and officers were instructed by ECS Committee in February 2024 to carry out further work to identify potential future options for primary school provision in Northfield, alongside a review of the long term future for Northfield Academy.

Initial scoping work in response to this instruction led officers to conclude that a wider review of all Council assets in Northfield*, and not only the schools, should be carried out to help maximise the potential for consolidating assets and improving wider Council services in the area.

*The area to be reviewed includes the localities of Middlefield, Mastrick, Cummings Park, Northfield and Heathryfold, and for the purposes of this document will hereafter collectively be referred to as 'the Northfield area'. A map of the area to be reviewed along with a list of the assets likely to be in scope is shown at Appendix 1.

2. Business Aims, Needs, Objectives and Constraints

Provide an overview of the sponsoring organisation and explain how the project is strategically placed to contribute to the delivery of organisational goals within the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and the Local Development Plan (LDP).

By identifying the options for consolidating assets within the Northfield area, the project will 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. Reducing the number of operational buildings within the area, and particularly removing older buildings which are less efficient to run, will help to reduce the overall carbon emissions from the estate.

Explain how the project supports the existing policies and strategies of the organisation and will assist in achieving the business goals, strategic aims and business plans of the organisation.

The project will support the overall delivery of the School Estate Plan, approved by Committee in September 2022. In turn the School Estate Plan acts as a strategic implementation plan for the Council's Property and Estates Strategy.

Implementing the actions from the School Estate Plan as instructed by Committee will help to ensure that the school estate is effectively managed, and can continue to support and contribute to the delivery of high quality services for children and young people, and for wider school communities.

Reviewing other asset types within Northfield alongside the schools will help contribute towards reducing costs associated with the operation of Council buildings. Where appropriate, links will be made to other relevant feasibility studies and reviews relating to assets within the review area (eg. future depots strategy).

Establish a compelling case for change based on business needs, eg demand for services, deficiencies in existing provision etc. Where are we now and where do we need to get to?

Certain primary schools within the Northfield Associated Schools Group (ASG) are located in close proximity to each other, including Bramble Brae and Manor Park Schools, which are less than one mile apart. Pupil numbers at Bramble Brae School are expected to fall to 65% of its capacity from 2028, whilst the occupancy level at Manor Park School is expected to fall to 55%, and the roll at Muirfield School is predicted to fall to as low as 27% of its available capacity within that timescale.

In light of the forecast decline in pupil numbers at these schools, there is a requirement to consider the options for reducing the number of primary schools in the Northfield ASG, to help ensure that pupil rolls at the schools in this area can be maintained at sustainable levels in the medium to long term.

At Northfield Academy, Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) has been found to be present with the roof structure in various locations around the school site. Whilst there were no immediate safety concerns reported by the specialist engineers who inspected and tested the roof panels in the school, officers were instructed by ECS Committee in February 2024, to carry out a detailed options appraisal for the long term future of the school, with a view to providing a solution to address the presence of RAAC within the building.

A review of other Council owned assets in the area, alongside the schools, will allow for a wider range of options to be considered, in terms of consolidating buildings and offering services in different ways, which will help to maximise the potential savings and improvements which could be achieved.

The review will focus on:

- Current asset utilisation and future service requirements
- Building running costs and annual maintenance costs
- Building condition and suitability (including backlog maintenance and ability to meet net zero ambitions)
- Opportunities for asset rationalisation, to better meet future service requirements and reduce overall costs
- Opportunities to create a new school community campus to incorporate a range of services which would support asset rationalisation
- Viability of progressing options in relation to capital spend required against revenue savings.
- Non property revenue cost impacts (e.g. staffing models/ travel costs etc.)

Identify any constraints, eg timing issues, legal requirements, professional standards, planning constraints. Any linkages and interdependencies with other programmes and projects should be explained, especially where the proposed project is intended to contribute to shared outcomes across multiple Clusters.

The review will be limited to non-residential, operational properties only within the review area – as defined within the map and assets list at Appendix 1 of this document.

It is likely that pupil numbers in Northfield will increase as a result of planned new housing development at Greenferns, which falls within the catchment area for Westpark School and Northfield Academy. The numbers of pupils expected to be generated by the Greenferns development will therefore need to be taken into account when considering the options for the Northfield ASG.

There is currently no allocation within the Council's capital programme to support the construction of any new assets in Northfield, should this be proposed to support the closure and consolidation of existing assets. Any identified options which involve new construction projects will therefore be subject to the identification of appropriate funding sources to deliver them.

3. Stakeholder Issues

Identify the key stakeholders and explain their involvement. Indicate their level of commitment to the project as specifically as possible. Describe any consultations held or still required. Are there any outstanding stakeholder issues?

There are several stakeholder groups who will have an interest in the outcomes of the assets review, including people who live in Northfield, parents of all schools, local elected members, MPs and MSPs, community councils, and also the staff and pupils within the schools affected.

The School Estate Plan sets out a commitment to engage with all stakeholder groups from an early stage, so that views and feedback about the available options can be gathered and considered prior to any decisions being taken.

Any recommendations to close schools or change the arrangements for primary school provision will also require formal statutory public consultation, before any final decisions on making changes can be taken.

4. Management and Implementation

Give a preliminary indication of the proposed project management structure and key personnel. Is any consultancy support likely to be required? Identify accommodation, staff and Trade Union issues. Describe any legal, contractual or procurement issues. Are there any important outstanding management/implementation considerations?

The review of assets will be led by Corporate Landlord.

5. Consideration of Options

Provide an initial list of options identified that could meet the objectives and briefly describe their main features (consider variations in scale, quality, technique, location, timing etc).

NB: A preferred option should not be identified before options have been developed and appraised more fully at the Outline Business Case stage.

Detail any planned or agreed dates, milestones, completion dates, required delivery deadlines or other time constraints on the project or the affected business areas.

None identified at this stage. The project will focus on a review of the assets which may generate potential options for consolidation. A feasibility study would then be required to explore those options further.

6. Costs, Benefits and Risks

Provide broad estimates of the capital and revenue costs of the project. If financial savings are anticipated, explain their nature and quantify them broadly. Describe the non-monetary costs that are expected to arise. Set down the spending objectives as specifically as possible at this stage to describe clearly what the organisation is seeking to achieve in terms of targeted outcomes and provide the basis for post project evaluation. So, the key question to answer is '**why are we undertaking this project?**' in terms of:

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Economy
- Compliance
- Replacement

The review of assets will be carried out from within existing staff and financial resources.

Identify the benefits, both monetary and non-monetary, in relation to the agreed scope and key service requirements for the project. The benefits can be direct (Aberdeen City Council) and indirect (eg Integration Joint Board).

The review may identify opportunities for consolidating buildings, which will ultimately help to reduce any inefficiencies associated with the current condition and utilisation of assets, and reduce the overall cost of running the estate. It also has the potential to bring about improvements to service delivery, through achieving efficiencies in the deployment of staff and resources across a smaller number of buildings.

Removing older, inefficient buildings will also help to contribute to the Council's net-zero carbon ambitions.

Identify the main risks – business (political, reputational) service (design, operational, finance) and external (legislation, inflation) risks, in relation to the agreed scope and key service requirements for the project. Identify any potential mitigation measures.

As stated above, the project is unfunded and any options are likely to have capital cost implications. Appropriate funding will need to be identified to allow any preferred option to be taken forwards.

7. Funding and Affordability

Outline the estimated phasing of cash requirements. Identify the expected sources of funding and the degree to which the funders are committed. Indicate the current cash provision for the project (if any) and the additional resources that are likely to be required. State any particular concerns over affordability.

The review of assets will be carried out from within existing staff and financial resources. Any options are likely to have capital cost implications, and appropriate funding will need to be identified to allow any preferred option to be taken forwards.

State the cost, and identify the budget, to develop the project to prepare an Outline Business Case.

Following the review, the total cost of carrying out a feasibility study to develop any identified options is estimated at £40,000. This cost can be met from the allocation within the current Capital Programme for School Estate Plan feasibility studies..

The cost of implementing any changes will be dependent on which option is taken forwards as the preferred option, and detail on this will be provided within the outline business case.

8. Assumptions

Document the high-level assumptions that have been made during the development of the business case and any other unanswered questions that may be significant. Refer to the Supplementary Guidance on Optimism Bias and detail the assumptions you have made in constructing the costs and business case.

[Green Book Supplementary Guidance Optimism Bias \(gov.uk webpage\)](#) (under 'Other Guidance and Reference Documents')

N/A

9. Document Revision History

Version	Reason	By	Date
0.1	First draft for officer consultation	AJ	04/06/24
1.0	Amended draft (added detail on scope including Appendix 1) following officer comments	AJ	19/06/24

The list below highlights the Council owned assets located within the Northfield area along with an estimate of their annual running costs, for consideration for a placed based review of the Northfield area.

File No.	Property / Address	Property Type	Condition Rating	Suitability Rating	Annual Running Cost
106	Mastrick Library Greenfern Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6TR	Library	B	B	£36,109
1063	Social Care & Wellbeing Records Store Unit B Whitemyres Avenue Mastrick Industrial Estate Aberdeen AB16 6HQ	Premises (Commercial)	B	A	£13,650
1063	Records Storage Facility Unit A Whitemyres Avenue Mastrick Industrial Estate Aberdeen City AB16 6HQ	Premises (Commercial)	B	A	£18,925
134	Mastrick Housing Office Spey Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6SF	Office	B	B	£65,656
1456	Hillylands - Community Special Needs 2 Croft Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6RB	Rehabilitation Centre	B	A	£19,933
1458	Len Ironside Centre Mastrick Drive Aberdeen AB16 6UE	Day Centre- Disabled	A	A	£217,366
1462	Westpark School (formerly Westerton) Cruden Crescent Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7JD	School-Primary	B	B	£306,081
1481	Muirfield School Mastrick Drive Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6UE	School-Primary	B	B	£299,580
1483	Northfield Academy Granitehill Place Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7AU	School-Secondary	B	C	£1,232,404
1534	The Quarry Centre 35 Cummings Park Crescent Aberdeen AB16 7AS	Family Centre	B	B	£170,499
1634	Quarryhill Primary School Birkhall Parade Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 5QT	School-Primary	B	C	£254,335
1636	Bramble Brae Primary School Cummings Park Drive Aberdeen AB16 7BL	School-Primary	B	B	£313,410
1697	House 11 Craigendarroch Place Aberdeen AB16 5SE	Group Home	B	A	£2,747
1749	Community Equipment OT Store Unit C/D Whitemyres Avenue Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6HQ	Premises (Commercial)	B	B	£14,672
1758	Manor Park School Danestone Circle Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7YB	School-Primary	A	A	£1,145,456
1829	Marchburn Childrens Home 8 Marchburn Road Aberdeen AB16 7NN	Childrens Home	A	B	£58,055
1850	House 233 Birkhall Parade 233 Birkhall Parade Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 5QT	Group Home	B	B	£32,656
1876	Williamson Family Centre Mastrick Close Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6XZ	Family Centre	A	A	£87,631
1889	Mastrick Community Centre Greenfern Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6TR	Community Centre (Leased)	B	A	£54,717

19	Middlefield Community Project Lord Provost Henry E Rae Community Centre Manor Avenue Aberdeen AB16 7UR	Community Centre (Leased)	B	A	£153,305
1911	Day Care Centre Kingswood Court Invercauld Road Aberdeen AB16 5RX	Day Centre- Elderly	A	A	£178,874
1913	Stocket Parade Hostel 16 Stocket Parade Aberdeen AB16 5QN	Group Home	B	A	£60,835
1920	Northfield Community Centre Byron Square Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7LL	Community Centre (Leased)	B	B	£48,439
1924	Mastrick Area Social Work Office Greenfern Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6SH	Office	B	A	£65,801
240	Northfield Swimming Pool & Fitness Centre Kettlehills Crescent Northfield Aberdeen AB16 5PL	Swimming Pool	A	A	£115,965
247	Northfield Outdoor Sports Centre Provost Fraser Drive Northfield Aberdeen AB16 5TL	Outdoor Sports Facility	B	B	£1,580
2908	Cummings Park Learning Centre Cummings Park Crescent Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7AR	Community Learning Centre	B	B	£64,274
3144	Heathryburn Primary School Davidson Drive Aberdeen AB16 7FQ	School-Primary	A	A	£1,169,572
3236	Aberdeen Treasure Hub Granitehill Road Aberdeen AB16 7AX	Depot	A	A	£328,824
3248	Orchard Brae School Howes Road Aberdeen AB16 7RW	School-ASN	A	A	£460,439
3364	Cummings Park Nursery Cumming Park Crescent Aberdeen AB16 7AS	School-Nursery	A	A	£11,377
36	Depot Cairnwell Drive Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 5ND	Depot	B	B	£42,789
83	Cummings Park Community Flat 122 Cummings Park Drive Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7BB	Community Flat	B	A	£490

Key

Blue = Sport Aberdeen Assets

Orange = Assets which are potentially out of scope for the review, and which will be determined in the early stages of the project