

## Appendix 1

### Riverbank School Excess Capacity : Summary of Options

<b>Option 1 – Do Nothing</b>	
Description	This option would result in no action being taken to identify alternative uses for the eight surplus classroom spaces at Riverbank School. This would enable the school to make use of the spaces as it sees fit, for additional general purpose / breakout space, storage etc, and to respond positively to any unanticipated surge in demand for pupil places.
Expected Costs	There would be no direct cost in implementing this option – however, leaving eight classroom spaces unused / under-utilised would reduce the overall efficiency of the building. Based on the estimated total running cost for the building and the size of floorspace which would be surplus to requirement, there would therefore be an indirect cost to the Council of approximately £28k per year.
Expected Benefits / Disbenefits	<p><u>Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoids any disruption to existing services and to the running of Riverbank School</li> <li>• Allows the school maximum flexibility in how classroom spaces are allocated and used</li> <li>• Ensures there is sufficient classroom space available should pupil numbers increase significantly.</li> </ul> <p><u>Disbenefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not provide a solution to the excess capacity at Riverbank School</li> <li>• Does not help improve the overall efficiency of the building</li> </ul>
Risks Specific to this Option	Implementing this option risks drawing criticism that the new building does not provide value for money, in that a significant amount of space in the building is under-utilised.
Viability	Whilst this is not the recommended option for the reasons detailed above, it is considered viable as it could be implemented without any difficulty.
Other Points	None identified.

## Option 2 – Relocation of Services from Sunnybank School

Description	<p>This option would involve the reconfiguration of the surplus classroom spaces within the new Riverbank School building, to accommodate other education services.</p> <p>Officers had previously identified a potential need to find alternative office and classroom accommodation for the ASN and Outreach Services (comprising Aberdeen School for the Deaf and the English as an Additional Language Service), which are currently based at Sunnybank School. This was in response to previous school roll forecasts indicating that pupil numbers at Sunnybank School were rising significantly, and therefore that the space occupied by the ASN and Outreach Services would be needed as classroom space.</p> <p>Officers considered that the surplus classroom space at Riverbank School could be used to accommodate some or all of the ASN &amp; Outreach Services, which in turn would free up space in the Sunnybank building to be used as classrooms by Sunnybank School. Based on the current use of space at Sunnybank School, the ASN &amp; Outreach Services would require up to eight classroom spaces in the new Riverbank building, to be used as offices, meeting rooms and teaching spaces, if all services were to be relocated.</p> <p>However, more recent school roll forecasts now indicate that pupil numbers at Sunnybank School are not expected to increase as sharply as previously indicated, and the spaces occupied by the ASN &amp; Outreach Services are not likely to be required for use as classrooms by Sunnybank School.</p>
Expected Costs	<p><u>Capital Costs</u></p> <p>It is likely that significant costs would be involved in making changes to the design and layout of spaces and entrances in the new Riverbank School to accommodate the ASN &amp; Outreach Services.</p> <p><u>Revenue Costs</u></p> <p>There would be a cost implication for packing and relocating resources, furniture etc from Sunnybank School to new Riverbank School</p> <p>As this option was discounted as unviable at an early stage, for the reasons outlined below, detailed costs for this option have not been obtained.</p>

Expected Benefits / Disbenefits	<p><u>Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures all classroom spaces at the new Riverbank School building are fully utilised, either by the school or by the ASN &amp; Outreach Services, thus maximising the efficiency of the Riverbank building</li> </ul> <p><u>Disbenefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires significant retrospective changes to be made to the design, configuration and layout of the Riverbank building, to provide appropriate, separate and secure space for the ASN &amp; Outreach Services. This could significantly compromise the original intended design and flow of the new school building and reduce the positive impact that the building will have on learning and teaching.</li> <li>Creates significant disruption to the ASN &amp; Outreach Services, if they were required to relocate, and potential logistical difficulties with management and staffing of services, if only some services were to relocate, and the remaining services were to remain at Sunnybank School.</li> </ul>
Risks Specific to this Option	<p>Implementing this option would require most if not all of the surplus classroom spaces at the new Riverbank building to be permanently repurposed for use by the ASN &amp; Outreach services. This would remove any flexibility in the use of these spaces and risk the school reaching or exceeding its capacity, if pupil numbers were to start to rise significantly.</p>
Viability	<p>Given that there is no longer a requirement to free up space at Sunnybank School, relocating the ASN &amp; Outreach services from the Sunnybank building to the Riverbank building would not provide a solution to the issue of excess unused classroom capacity; it would simply transfer the surplus space from Riverbank School to Sunnybank School, as there would be no alternative use for the vacated space at Sunnybank School. For this reason, coupled with the disruption likely to be caused to both the ASN &amp; Outreach services and Riverbank School, this option is not considered viable.</p>
Other Points	<p>None identified.</p>

**Option 3 – Relocation of Autism Outreach Service Plus Early Intervention Space (Preferred Option)**

Description

This option would involve the Autism Outreach Service, currently based at the former Ashgrove Children’s Centre building, relocating to the new Riverbank School building, from where they would operate an early intervention service within their current resources. The space at Riverbank would also provide for a very small number of children from across the city to attend on site to access intensive support, where this might be of benefit.

This option would provide an opportunity to trial a new approach to supporting pupils with additional support needs, as outlined within the recent report from the Education Psychology Service, which recommended establishing an early intervention space supported by ASN Outreach, as a test of change for supporting pupils across the city, and working and learning collaboratively from this.

The Service could occupy up to four of the surplus classroom spaces (1 room to be used as an office space for staff, and up to 3 rooms to be used for supporting pupils on site, and as a test for an early intervention space). The rooms would allow staff to provide outreach services to pupils across the city, and also to support up to 10 young people on site at any one time initially, to test and evaluate the effectiveness of this model of early intervention.

Children would remain on the roll of their own school and attend the unit at Riverbank to develop strategies to allow them to cope better in their mainstream school. It is recommended that the unit is established initially for a trial period of two years.

The spaces at the new Riverbank School are considered to be more suited to providing this type of support, compared with the rooms currently used by the Service at the Ashgrove Children’s Centre building. The majority of rooms at the Ashgrove building are currently used to accommodate early years classes from Orchard Brae School.

Given that existing staff would be relocating to the Riverbank building, there would be no staff costs involved in adopting this option. Some minor reconfiguration of the existing building design would be required however, to provide a dedicated toilet and changing facility adjacent to the unit. The four classrooms would be largely self-contained within one end of the Upper Stages wing of the new Riverbank building, with a secure entry door between the unit and the rest of the school, and direct access to a secure garden and play area.

Expected Costs	<p><b><u>Capital Costs</u></b></p> <p>Additional cost to the Riverbank School capital project (for reconfiguration and provision of toilet and changing space) – these costs will be incorporated within the overall project budget.</p> <p><b><u>Annual Revenue Costs</u></b></p> <p>There would be a cost implication for packing and relocating equipment, furniture etc from Ashgrove Children’s Centre to the new Riverbank School building, estimated at <b>£5,000</b></p>
Expected Benefits / Disbenefits	<p><b><u>Benefits</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an alternative use for some of the surplus classroom space at the new Riverbank School building, whilst retaining flexibility in the use of remaining spaces should these be required to form additional classes at short notice</li> <li>• Allows the Autism Outreach Service to relocate to more suitable premises and the opportunity to test and evaluate the use of an early intervention unit, to provide specialist support to young people for a targeted amount of time, with a view to them then returning to mainstream education</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Disbenefits</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires some retrospective changes to be made to the design and specification of the new Riverbank building. This could compromise to a limited extent the original intended design and flow of the new school building.</li> </ul>
Risks Specific to this Option	None identified.
Viability	This option would provide a solution to the surplus classroom space at the new Riverbank School building, whilst providing valuable specialist support to pupils with additional support needs. It is considered to be viable and is the recommended option.
Other Points	If the option is approved, work would be undertaken over the remainder of this school session to plan the relocation of the service and how the new unit will be operated, and to identify pupils who would benefit from attending initially. It is anticipated that the unit would open from August 2025.

**Option 4 – Permanent relocation of Orchard Brae School pupils and staff from Ashgrove Children’s Centre**

<p>Description</p>	<p>This option would involve the relocation of pupils and staff from Orchard Brae School which are currently based within the Ashgrove Children’s Centre building, to the new Riverbank School building.</p> <p>Currently, Orchard Brae School uses four classrooms at Ashgrove Children’s Centre for children with complex additional support needs (three nursery classes and one class for primary aged children), along with staff office space and touch down spaces for outreach staff.</p> <p>The building provides spaces for up to 34 children and 34 members of staff who are permanently based at Ashgrove, with 20 further outreach staff who spend some of their working week in the building.</p> <p>Under this option, at least 6 of the surplus classrooms at the new Riverbank School building would be required to be repurposed to accommodate the Orchard Brae classes and staff.</p> <p>The Ashgrove Children’s Centre building would then be considered for alternative uses, or potentially for disposal if it is deemed to be surplus to requirement, and could therefore deliver an overall saving to the Council.</p>
<p>Expected Costs</p>	<p><u>Capital Costs</u></p> <p>Due to the special and complex needs of children attending the Orchard brae nursery classes, It is likely that significant costs would be involved in making physical changes to the design and layout of spaces and entrances in the new Riverbank School to accommodate the Orchard Brae classes, and to create suitable office space and facilities for staff. The Riverbank classrooms have been designed and built to accommodate children in P1-7 year groups, and significant alterations would be required to make them suitable for use as ASN nursery classes. Such changes would be permanent, and should there be a requirement in future for the spaces to be put back into use as P1-7 classrooms, further work would be required, at additional cost.</p> <p><u>Revenue Costs</u></p> <p>There would be a cost implication for packing and relocating resources, furniture etc from Ashgrove Children’s Centre to the new Riverbank School building.</p> <p>As this option was discounted as unviable at an early stage, for the reasons outlined below, detailed costs for this option have not been obtained.</p>

Expected Benefits / Disbenefits	<p><u>Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an alternative use for some of the surplus classroom space at the new Riverbank School building.</li> <li>• Allows the potential disposal of the Ashgrove Children’s Centre building, if it is deemed to be surplus to requirement, resulting in a revenue saving to the Council and potential capital receipt.</li> </ul> <p><u>Disbenefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires significant retrospective changes to be made to the design, configuration and layout of the Riverbank building, to provide appropriate, separate and secure space for the Orchard Brae nursery classes and staff. This could significantly compromise the original intended design and flow of the new school building and reduce the positive impact that the building will have on learning and teaching.</li> <li>• Creates significant disruption to the Orchard Brae nursery classes, if they were required to relocate to the new building.</li> </ul>
Risks Specific to this Option	<p>Implementing this option would require most of the surplus classroom spaces at the new Riverbank building to be permanently repurposed for use by the Orchard Brae nursery classes. This would remove any flexibility in the use of these spaces and risk the school reaching or exceeding its capacity, if pupil numbers were to start to rise significantly.</p>
Viability	<p>Given the significant work which would be required to convert the existing P1-7 classroom spaces into specialist ASN nursery provision and staff office space, for which no budget has been identified, this option is considered to be not viable.</p>
Other Points	<p>None identified.</p>

**Option 5 – Temporary relocation of St Peter’s RC School to new Riverbank building, for duration of St Peter’s Capital Works**

<p>Description</p>	<p>Following approval by Committee in November 2023, a project is under way to substantially extend and refurbish the existing St Peter’s RC School site, and the pupils and staff at St Peter’s are due to move temporarily to the existing Riverbank School building for the duration of those works, commencing from Summer 2025 (after the existing Riverbank School has relocated to its new building). Upon completion of the refurbishment work, expected to be in Winter 2026, St Peter’s pupils and staff would move back to the St Peter’s site.</p> <p>This option considers the possibility of temporarily relocating St Peter’s RC School to the surplus classroom spaces in the new Riverbank School building, for the duration of the refurbishment works at the St Peter’s site, as an alternative to the planned move to the existing Riverbank School site.</p> <p>The pupil roll at St Peter’s RC School is currently 187, and there are eight separate classes. All eight of the surplus classroom spaces at the new Riverbank School building would therefore be required to accommodate the St Peter’s pupils.</p>
<p>Expected Costs</p>	<p><u>Capital Costs</u> No additional costs identified</p> <p><u>Revenue Costs</u> No additional costs identified</p> <p><u>Revenue Saving</u> This option would remove the need to continue running the existing Riverbank School site to accommodate St Peter’s School, and would therefore allow an immediate saving to be made on the running costs for the existing Riverbank building, which amount to approximately <b>£293k per year.</b></p> <p><u>Potential Earlier Capital Receipt</u> Proceeding with this option could result in the existing Riverbank site being declared surplus to requirement, and it could then be disposed of, leading to a potential capital receipt at least 18 months sooner than would be the case if St Peter’s School were to occupy the building for the duration of the St Peter’s refurbishment works.</p> <p>As this option was discounted as unviable at an early stage, for the reasons outlined below, an updated valuation for the Riverbank school site has not been obtained.</p>



Expected Benefits / Disbenefits	<p><u>Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an alternative use for all of the surplus classroom space at the new Riverbank School building.</li> <li>• Allows the potential earlier disposal of the current Riverbank School building, if it is deemed to be surplus to requirement, resulting in a revenue saving to the Council and potential capital receipt.</li> </ul> <p><u>Disbenefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires all eight of the surplus classroom spaces at the new Riverbank School building to be put into use as classrooms for St Peter's School, until Winter 2026, effectively making the building full to capacity. If the pupil rolls at either Riverbank School or St Peter's School were to rise significantly in that time period, it may not be possible to accommodate all pupils within the building.</li> <li>• This option would require two schools to operate from one building, requiring them to share ancillary spaces including playgrounds, dining and gym halls, assembly hall, reception area etc. This may create logistical difficulties which could create disruption to school management and to learning and teaching.</li> </ul>
Risks Specific to this Option	As detailed above, there would be a risk of the building reaching full capacity and removing any flexibility to create more teaching space, should pupil numbers at either school rise significantly.
Viability	Given that all of the available surplus space at the new Riverbank School would be required to accommodate St Peter's School, and due to the complexities and potential disruption which may be caused by running two schools from within one building which is not designed for that purpose, this option is not considered to be viable.
Other Points	None identified.