ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	**Education, Culture and Sport**
DATE	**12 September 2013**
DIRECTOR	**Gayle Gorman**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**School Security Update**
REPORT NUMBER:	**ECS/13/062**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee about ongoing work to improve school security.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee notes the ongoing work to improve school security.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is currently a dedicated budget of £130,596 (in 2013/14), held within Education, Culture and Sport to fund small to medium School Security improvements. This budget is under considerable pressure, given the volume of work. In addition to this budget, school security improvements are incorporated into larger planned building projects, funded as part of the Condition and Suitability Programme or within the main non-housing Capital Programme.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Where physical improvement works in schools are identified, there are likely to be property implications, which would have to be discussed with colleagues within the Architects team and may be dependant on capacity to take on additional work.

Work in schools to address security issues will have implications for the Education, Culture and Sport Service Asset Management Plan, particularly in relation to the condition and suitability of these buildings.

5. BACKGROUND/ MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Since the Dunblane Primary School tragedy in March 1996, the safety and security of our school pupils and staff has been a major concern. Immediately following the incident the report by Lord Cullen made a series of recommendations for improving and managing school security, with the key object being to ensure pupil and staff safety.

5.2 At that time Aberdeen City Council established a School Security Working Group and seconded school staff to co-ordinate a range of initiatives on school security. Of particular note was the installation of a Door Access Control system on all City Council schools.

5.3 A School Security Review Group was re-established in 2010, following the establishment of the Education, Culture and Sport service, to provide a service-wide forum for discussion about school security issues and concerns within City Council schools.

5.4 This Group was made up of representatives from: Primary Schools; Secondary Schools; Education Service Managers; Trade Unions; Health and Safety Unit; Facilities Management; Property Services.

5.5 The aim of the Group was to review security issues and concerns within City Council schools, in order to identify actions to address these. The intention was that these could be prioritised in order to assist the allocation of resources via the Education, Culture and Sport school security budgets, and the Corporate Condition and Suitability Programme.

5.6 In order to provide a focus for this work, a detailed questionnaire looking at school security issues was devised, piloted and 'rolled out' to all schools during late 2011/ early 2012.

5.7 The results of the questionnaire have been used to help prioritise potential work to improve security in schools, alongside feedback from colleagues in Facilities and Asset Management. Where possible, work can then be funded from the School Security Budgets or the Corporate Condition and Suitability Programme.

5.8 The Group has also been considering specific security incidents in individual schools, to both highlight trends, as well as to identify specific interventions.

5.9 Over the last year we have been progressing a range of priority actions to address issues of school security as follows.

5.10 A major project has been the upgrading of the Door Access Control System in Primary Schools. Whilst the system has generally served schools well, one of the main limitations is that it operates through a single centrally controlled computer system. This means that whenever there is a problem with the system, it affects all primary schools. The current project involves moving to a more flexible system, which would be operated locally by each school, though all the hardware of door buzzers, door cameras and controls would remain. A major challenge for this project has been the delays caused by the requirement to have asbestos surveys carried out prior to any cabling work and the need to install speakers to

ensure that alarms are audible. However, we have currently completed 19 schools out of 46 and assuming no further technical problems are encountered, we would hope to have the remainder completed by the end of the financial year.   .

5.11   The other major priority for our School Security work has been redesigning school entrances and reception areas, where these were assessed as not offering adequate security or control. In particular, there were a number of our older Primary Schools, where the School Office was located away from the entrance and in a number of cases, actually on the second floor of the building.

5.12   Projects that have been carried out over the last year include:

- Broomhill School - New Reception/ Office, (now complete and operating very effectively);
- Kittybrewster School - Preparation for New Reception/ Office,(preliminary investigations identified that the whole building would require to be re-wired prior to security works being carried out);
- Woodside School - New Reception/ Office, (there were major structural problems that had to be addressed, prior to this project being progressed, though work was recently completed)
- Dyce Academy - New Secure Reception Area, (now complete);
- Dyce Primary - New Secure Reception Area, (now complete);
- Muirfield School - Improved foyer security/ door controls, (now complete);
- Cromdale Outdoor Centre - Installation of CCTV system, (now complete).

5.13   Priority projects which we are in the early stages of progressing over the coming year include:

- Kittybrewster School - Completion of New Reception/ Office;
- Walker Road School - New Reception/ Office;
- Skene Square School - New Reception/ Office;
- Quarryhill School - Installation of CCTV system, partially using salvaged equipment from Newhills School;
- Dyce Primary School - Fencing the school to improve playground security;
- Ferryhill School - Improving the external playground security;
- Finalising the 'roll out' of the upgraded Door Access Control System in Primary Schools;
- Review of school perimeter/ playground fencing across the City;
- Review of school security guidelines, in the light of recent breaches.

5.14   Wherever possible, improvements to School Security are incorporated into other Condition and Suitability and capital works to Schools. In addition, there are number of relatively minor works that are carried out in response to specific problems or security breaches. These include examples such as improving gates and locks; changes and upgrades to the Door Access Control Systems within specific schools; improvements to CCTV systems; which is one of the reasons that the Service is bidding for additional funds for 2014/15.

6.   **IMPACT**

Corporate - The continued implementation of the Property Asset Management Plan will ensure that the Council is utilising its property portfolios to support Services in implementing the Single Outcome Agreement.

Public – Subject to Service Priorities

7.   **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Education, Culture & Sport Service Asset Management Plan 2012 - 2017
Primary School Estates Review – March 2013
Property Asset Management Plan 2012 (Non-Housing)

8.   **REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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