

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education & Children's Services
DATE	8 September 2016
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Torry – Proposed New Primary School with Early Learning and Childcare Facilities and Community Hub
REPORT NUMBER	ECS\16\045
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Committee with an update on the review of primary school provision in Torry and recommends the construction of a new Primary School to increase capacity along with early learning and childcare facilities and the creation of a Community Hub. This follows instructions to officers at the full Council meeting of 25 February 2016.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the following:
- To note the community engagement that has taken place to date and the analysis of the feedback and comments received from the Community;
 - To note the option appraisal work and outcome of the preferred site for the new primary school, early learning and childcare facilities and Community Hub;
 - To delegate officers to commence a programme of formal consultation regarding taking forward the Torry Academy site as the preferred site for the development of a new Primary School, early education and childcare facilities and Community Hub;
 - To ask officers to feedback the responses to the formal consultation to a future meeting of this Committee; and

- Otherwise note the contents of this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 At the budget setting meeting of the Council on 25 February 2016, £20 million was allocated from the 5 year capital programme to increase the Primary School capacity in Torry and create an integrated community hub.
- 3.2 Officers are presently reviewing the costs of the new facilities and this will be reported to Committee once the final scope of the Community Hub has been confirmed. This will be completed in time for Committee to make a final determination following the formal public consultation.
- 3.3 In creating the new early learning and child care provision, funding may be available from the Scottish Government. The Council may also be able to apply for a Regeneration Capital Grant which could be used as a contribution to the costs of developing a community hub in Torry. If available, the application would be submitted in April 2017. Developer Contributions may also be available for the development of community facilities in Torry.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Legal

- 4.1.1 Any future public consultations will require compliance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. As these proposals do not refer to the proposed closure of any school in either consultation exercise, any decision to implement them by this Committee cannot be called in by Scottish Ministers.

4.2 Health and Safety

- 4.2.1 Any new build proposals will require health and safety plans in accordance with Construction, Design and Management legislation.

4.3 Risk Management

- 4.3.1 Management of risk will be identified monitored and mitigated in accordance with the ability to meet risk policy and programmed objectives. As with all Council capital projects, this project will form part of the overall reporting and progress updates reports via the Strategic, Asset and Capital Group.

4.4 Resources

- 4.4.1 A fully resourced, multi-disciplinary design team is key to the successful delivery of this project. A review of how best to deliver the project will be undertaken in time for the consideration of the Consultation Report at a future meeting of this Committee..

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 At its meeting on 25 February 2016, Council instructed officers to review the education provision in the Torry community, recognising the rising school aged population resulting from new housing developments and increased birth rates in the area, and to report back to committee in the September 2016 cycle of meetings with detailed options appraisals, including details of suitable sites, project timelines and costs. The education provision recommended in this report also considers the need to enhance the early learning and childcare provision in Torry.

- 5.1.2 Council also remitted officers to develop proposals for a new Community Hub in Torry which would be co-located with the education provision. Officers from Education & Children's Services and Communities Housing & Infrastructure have therefore worked jointly in developing the proposals presented in this report, with a view to developing new education provision and a community hub on the same site.

5.2 Primary School Provision

- 5.2.1 The then Policy and Strategy (Education) Committee and Full Council meetings of 29 and 30 April 2008 respectively agreed that Victoria Road School should close with the pupils being transferred to Walker Road School and Tullos School. The School Estate Strategy Report – Statutory Consultation Report identified that the closure of Victoria Road School would result in the following estimated capital costs and savings:

Capital Implications of Closing Victoria Road School

Item	Cost (£) if Walker Road School is Receiving School	Cost (£) if Tullos School is Receiving School
Building Alterations at Walker Road School		
1. Essential	149,000	51,000
2. Desirable	730,000	-
Disability Discrimination Act compliance work	225,000	180,000
Fire Risk Assessment work	76,000	119,000
Condition and Suitability Requirements (over 6 year period)	-	4,340,000
Gross Capital Cost	1,180,000	4,690,000
Condition and Suitability Savings from Building Closure of Victoria Road School	(2,450,000)	2,450,000
Disability Discrimination Act compliance work	-	-
Fire Risk Assessment work	-	-
Savings from Building Closure	(2,450,000)	(2,450,000)
Net Capital Cost of Closing Victoria Road School	(1,270,000)	2,240,000

5.2.2 The above Table demonstrates that depending on which school pupils went to could result in a capital saving of £1,270,000 or result in a capital cost £2.24 million. Members will note that the original report did not contain any figures for savings in DDA compliance work or Fire Risk Assessment work.

5.2.3 In terms of revenue savings the report identified that £98,000 would be saved per annum in property running costs, with staffing savings of 6.0 FTE in support staff. Taking an average cost of £15,000 this would result in annual staff revenue savings of £90,000.

5.2.4 The total revenue saving which arose from closing Victoria Road School was therefore in the region of £188,000.

Current Primary School Provision in Torry

5.2.5 Whilst current pupil roll projections indicate reducing numbers at both Walker Road and Tullos primary schools over the next seven years, it is recognised that the potential development of sites in Torry for housing would impact on the available capacity at these schools.

5.2.6 The current and forecast pupil rolls for both schools are illustrated in the Tables below:

Walker Road School Pupil Roll Forecast (capacity 420 places)

2016 (current)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
470	460	439	417	395	391	384

Tullos School Pupil Roll Forecast (capacity 360 places)

2016 (current)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
350	346	343	335	332	328	315

5.2.7 The potential development of the former Craiginches prison site for housing, for example, if it were to be approved, is likely to result in an increase in the pupil roll at Walker Road School, and similarly, the development of the former Victoria Road School site for housing is likely to increase the pupil roll at Tullos School. Any additional pupils generated from these developments will be added to the stated roll projections in the Tables above.

5.2.8 In recent years, additional rooms have been allocated into formal teaching rooms and this has reduced the flexibility in both schools for delivering the curriculum. The national developments in early learning and childcare will also add additional pressures to the capacity of both schools as children will be entitled to 30 hours per week of provision by 2020 and the Council will be required to provide places for 2 year olds. Further detail on the Early Years provision is provided in section 5.3 of this report.

5.2.9 It is for these reasons, that a new Primary School is required for the Torry community.

5.3 Early Years Provision

5.3.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to secure 600 hours per year of flexible provision for every 3 and 4 year old, and 15% of Scotland's most vulnerable 2 year olds, with a subsequent extension to 27% of the most vulnerable 2 year olds. The specific focus on eligible two year olds is to enhance the offer for children and families living in disadvantaged circumstances to ensure that they have enhanced support before they move into pre-school provision.

5.3.2 The government programme is to expand this offer to 1,140 hours for vulnerable 2 year olds, 3 and 4 year olds, and an expansion of childcare services for school age children by 2020. The policy intention is to ensure we deliver high quality Early Learning and Childcare services to improve outcomes for children and to remove barriers for working parents to support economic growth in Scotland.

5.3.3 It is estimated that to meet the above new targets, approximately 200 additional nursery and early years places would need to be provided for the Torry community. The existing primary school buildings in Torry would not have sufficient space to provide this number of places. The proposed new provision for Torry would therefore need to include significant capacity for the creation of the additional early years places likely to be required.

5.4 Community Empowerment

5.4.1 The Community Empowerment Scotland Act (2015) places an obligation on Community Planning Partners to deliver , in partnership with communities a 10 year Local Plan, with clear 10 year improvement measures, for natural communities who experience the poorest socio economic outcomes. These plans need to be in place by October 2017. Locality Planning presents opportunities to deliver innovative collaborative approaches to preventative intervention and the reduction of long term resource demands. Torry has been identified as one of the eight neighbourhoods in Aberdeen which will be the focus for Locality Planning.

5.4.2 As part of this process a Strategic Assessment is being developed for Torry which takes into account key data, population projections as well as incorporating past community consultations.

5.4.3 Key evidence emerging from the Strategic Assessment includes:

1. Torry's population, which accounts for 5% of Aberdeen City, is diverse in its makeup and has grown significantly over the last few years– in Torry West 20% of residents do not have English as a first language.
2. It is estimated that a quarter of children living in Torry are living in poverty, and 75% of Torry school children are in the most deprived quintile (20%).
3. Household incomes in Torry East are the lowest of all Aberdeen's 47 intermediate zones and unemployment is rising, but not as sharply as the rest of the City (due to the Oil and Gas downturn). It is estimated that 19% of the working age population is employment deprived. Torry East has 21% residents of working age claiming out of work benefits.

4. 1 in 3 Adults in Torry have no formal qualifications which limits future careers prospects and earnings potential (compared with 1 in 5 in Aberdeen as a whole)
5. The residents in Torry have poorer health outcomes – alcohol related hospital admissions are dropping but well above the City average and drugs related admissions in Torry East are the second highest in the city. Life expectancy is 13 years less in Torry East than the west end.
6. Children in Torry do less well academically than their city wide peers. The gap in ability is evident from early years and continues throughout the school years.
7. There is a strong sense of community and heritage in Torry.
8. Residents feel they have less access to facilities and amenities.

5.4.4 A Community and CPA priority setting session for Torry is being held in September which will inform the 10 year Locality plan, detailing improvement measures and actions to be taken by partners and the community, estimated to be completed by December 2016.

5.5 Community Hub

5.5.1 Given the requirements arising from the Community Empowerment Scotland ACT (2015) with respect to Locality Planning and the multi-faceted evidence emerging from the data analysis, there is a unique opportunity to deliver a facility which takes an integrated approach to delivering against the long term improvement measures. A new facility should be a bold step in delivering prevention measures which will impact on long-term outcomes. This should not be seen as a facility with a bolt on hub – it should be an integrated resource which tackles the multi layered complexities of the community – a new way of working.

5.5.2 This facility will provide opportunities for joined up working across public authorities, third sector and the community delivering a fit for purpose leading edge resource, which seeks to deliver services in a different way, ultimately leading to better life chances for young people. The new provision will take into account the future accommodation requirements and planned expansion programme of Big Noise Torry, which is a key project delivering outcome improvements in the Locality Plan.

5.5.3 An integrated community facility has been discussed in various formats over the years with the community and an opportunity to deliver this, in partnership with the residents of Torry, will increase confidence and trust.

5.6 Identification of sites

5.6.1 Working with colleagues in Land and Property Assets, officers identified a number of potential sites within the Torry Area, which could be considered as possible locations for a new school building, with the original brief focusing on the requirement to identify a site large enough to accommodate a two-stream primary school (434 places), 200 place nursery and the community hub.

5.6.2 Two sites were identified as possible sites for a school and community hub. These were the current Torry Academy site and the former St Fittick's depot, both of which are in Council ownership. During engagement sessions the possibility of using the building and land at the former Victoria Road School was raised by participants.

5.6.3 An appraisal exercise has been carried out to identify the feasibility of building the required provision in these locations which came to the following conclusions.

5.6.4 Former St Fittick's Depot

The land at the former St Fittick's depot is situated on St Fittick's Road at the eastern side of Tullos. The site is approximately 0.35 hectares which is not large enough for a 2 stream primary school and the range of community facilities. However there may a possibility to extend into the surrounding open space / golf course to accommodate the space requirements of the development. This would be subject to Planning approval as the extended site out-with the former depot is part of the Greenspace network Site No. 69 and part of it is designated as a Prime Landscape area meaning there is a presumption against development which is not related to recreation or sport

In summary, the location provides few opportunities for inclusion and shared opportunities. The overall area of the site is not large enough for the proposed development and is the least favoured option by the community.

5.6.5 Existing Torry Academy Site

Situated in the centre of Torry, this site is 1.7 hectares and relatively flat. The existing school site is surrounded on all side by roads from which access can be gained in cars and a bus route.

With the site currently being used for educational purposes there are unlikely to be any planning issues should a new primary school with community hub be located. It is an excellent location strategically to provide a wide range of opportunities for inclusion and shared opportunities with local primary schools and external partners. This site

provides all requirements for curricular and extracurricular learning opportunities and activities both internally and externally as well as providing opportunities for accommodation which could be used to provide community, cultural and sporting facilities.

5.6.6 Former Victoria Road School Site

The site comprises of the former Victoria Road Primary School and associated playground areas with the possibility of also incorporating the adjacent Council owned commercial premise. The site is 0.77 hectares, including the commercial ground adjacent to the former school site.

The existing granite school building, which still occupies a large part of the site has been empty for several years and is in poor condition internally. In addition, the current school building would require to be fundamentally remodelled and extended to accommodate the range of facilities which would be housed that it would not provide best value for money.

In addition, there is a live planning application for the development of the site and the Council will, subject to the conclusion of this planning process, enter into a legal agreement with the developer.

5.7 Conclusion

Each of the sites has been assessed against a range of set criteria, the Torry Academy site was identified as the most favourable for development. In summary, the site appraisal has highlighted that the Torry Academy site is the best strategic fit for the range of services which can be provided at the primary school and community hub.

5.8 Community Engagement

5.8.1 Officers from E&CS and CH&I planned and coordinated a joint approach for a series of informal engagement sessions in Torry over May and June which incorporated parents, community groups, residents and public authorities. An information letter was provided for schools to circulate to parents and carers. These events were further advertised via the Station House Media Unit, through local social media and local networks and Group call alerts were sent to parents by the schools in advance of the meeting dates.

5.8.2 The engagement consisted of two main strands: The provision of key information to stakeholders and the opportunity for stakeholders to submit their views. A comments card was devised to capture people's views and comments on the proposals and the preferred choice of site and a pro-forma was developed. The comment card was distributed to key community locations and an electronic survey was also used in

order to allow for wider participation and feedback (see appendix 4 for sample of comments card).

5.8.3 The main purpose of the engagement was to provide information on the proposals and to stimulate discussion so that stakeholders could provide their thoughts on improving and increasing the educational provision, establishing service gaps and gaining an understanding of community requirements for facilities and service provision in the Torry area.

5.8.4 Officers will continue to work with local community council/group meetings and provide feedback to the residents as this project develops.

5.9 **Summary of submissions:**

5.9.1 A total number of 175 responses were received, which can be broken down as follows:

- 15 comments cards received from Walker Road School
- 22 comment cards received from Tullos School
- 3 comment cards received from an EAL session
- 73 comment cards received from Big Noise 1st Birthday events from key community locations
- 62 submissions via online survey

5.9.2 Submissions from some stakeholders were made in more than one format. A summary of the feedback indicated that 75.4% viewed the proposal to create a new primary school and community hub as a good idea for Torry.

5.9.3 The 24.5% that did not view the proposal as a good idea were asked to give their reasons; these ranged from wanting Victoria Road School reopened, to the idea being a waste of money. Others commented that they were happy with their current schools.

5.9.4 In terms of the location of the new school, stakeholders were presented with a choice of two sites (i.e. Torry Academy site and St. Fittick's Depot site) and an "other" option (which gave an opportunity for residents to put forward ideas/sites that were not listed). 65.03% indicated the Torry Academy site as their preference, and 8.39% indicated the Former St. Fittick's Depot site. 26.57% indicated "other" and their suggestions included to use Victoria Road School (34 responses), to extend the existing Tullos Primary School (2 responses), and 2 further responses indicated "somewhere convenient".

5.9.5 Questions 4, 5 and 6 of the survey focused around the types of activities and services that residents would like to see in the new proposed school and hub but also the service gaps that currently exist.

5.9.6 Gaps in provision, ranked in order of popularity, were:

1. Information & Other – with the majority mentioning Housing, Benefits advice, employment, social work, drugs and alcohol, information about Torry, pharmacy,
2. Youth Provision
3. Childcare (including before and after school)
4. Adult Learning
5. Café/meeting space
6. Outdoor play

5.9.7 Types of services requested, ranked in order of popularity, were:

1. Health services – with the majority mentioning GP practices, access to social work, pharmacy services and drug and alcohol support
2. Information Services – with the majority mentioning, Housing services , Benefit services and access to Information about the area, employability services, and money advice.
3. Youth Services
4. Community Café
5. Childcare
6. General Purpose facilities & Classes
7. Library
8. Heritage and History

5.9.8 Activity options suggested, ranked in order of popularity, were:

1. Youth provision and café
2. Adult Learning Classes
3. Allotments & Playparks
4. Holiday & Afterschool Clubs
5. Information & Citizens advice
6. Music Arts and recreation

5.9.9 There was also an emphasis placed on ensuring “no empty assets remained” as part of the process and that investment was also allocated to existing school provision to ensure parity.

5.9.10 In addition to the community consultation, a separate exercise was carried out with partner agencies and community groups to again identify gaps in service, facility requirements and integration options.

5.9.11 The following key gaps in service provision were identified:

1. Health Services
2. Youth Provision
3. Drugs and Alcohol
4. Adult Learning
5. Housing Services
6. Information services

7. Employability

5.9.12 A number of services indicated that they would welcome a permanent presence in a facility, including ACC (Housing, Adult Learning, Communities, and City Wardens), Drugs Action and Station House Media Unit.

5.9.13 A number of agencies such as the Police suggested they would utilise the space but have a presence already in Torry. Community Groups and services such as third sector employability services would also utilise the space on a flexible and drop in basis, especially performance space.

5.9.14 The Joint Health and Social Partnership expressed an interest in the facility as it also delivers on their strategic vision to deliver integrated health and care with other key services at a locality level as well as decentralising certain services. The areas they identified were: Additional GP capacity, pharmacy, outreach clinic model.

5.9.15 The majority of the respondents identified Torry Academy as the preferred site.

5.10 Options Considered

5.10.1 During the course of this options appraisal process, officers concluded that the greater need within the Torry community is for an additional primary school with nursery and early years provision.

5.10.2 Consequently, the options outlined below have been developed with this in mind, whilst also considering the outcomes of the site appraisal and the views of the community put forward during the engagement sessions.

Option 1 – Do Nothing

5.10.3 If the current arrangements for nursery and primary education and community services in Torry were to be maintained, with no additional intervention or development of additional services or facilities, the following implications are likely:

- An anticipated shortfall of approximately 200 nursery places, following the introduction of an increased entitlement of 1140 hours.
- Limited prospects for significant investment in the existing primary schools in Torry, limiting the opportunities to improve the flexibility of spaces for the delivery of a 21st Century curriculum.
- Limited opportunities for delivering prevention measures and improving the socio-economic outlook for the local community.

- Potential for the community to feel that their views have not been fully listened to and their needs are not being fully met by the Council.
- No planned solution for the use of the Torry Academy site following the opening of the new South of the City secondary school.

Option 2 - A new two-stream primary school for Torry with early learning and childcare facilities, to be integrated with a new Community Hub, on the site of the existing Torry Academy.

5.10.4 This option includes the development of a new two-stream primary school, to complement the existing two primary schools in Torry. This would provide approximately 434 additional primary school places, along with nursery and childcare places for Torry. On the same site a new Community Hub would be built, to incorporate services based on the requirements identified in the community engagement process. The implications of accepting this option would include:

- Provision of a fit for purpose learning establishment that meets current and future roll capacities, and designed for the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Opportunities to meet the aspirations and long term improvement outcomes for Torry by potentially providing a range of community, council and partner services under the one roof.
- Opportunity to redevelop the Torry Academy site, following the opening of the new South of the City secondary school
- Given the reducing rolls indicated in the forecasts for both of the existing primary schools, there is potential for an over-provision of primary school places in the medium to long term, leading to schools running below their capacity and therefore at less than optimum efficiency.
- The design will make the most efficient use of space which is flexible to meet a number of service provisions.

5.9.5 It is therefore recommended that Committee instructs officers to commence a programme of formal consultation regarding taking forward the Torry Academy site as the preferred site for the development of a new Primary School with pre-school and childcare provision and Community Hub.

5.10 Next Steps:

If the recommendations within the report are approved, officers will begin to develop a comprehensive programme of formal consultation regarding the proposal for the Torry Academy site as the preferred site for the new education provision and Community Hub. Future public consultations may require compliance with the requirements of the

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

6. IMPACT

6.1 Corporate

Aberdeen the Smarter City

- (1) We will enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing of all our citizens by offering support and activities which promote independence, resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- (2) Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st Century.
- (3) Again, working with partners, we will create a City of Learning which will empower individuals to fulfil their potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our communities.
- (4) We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the city economy.

6.2 Equality and Human Rights implications

A full Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment is not required for this report and has been reported accordingly to Sandra Howard. This will however be revisited once the statutory consultation has been completed.

6.3 Management of the School Estate

Improving Customer Experience

- 6.3.1 Should Committee approve this report, it will lead to a formal consultation on the creation of new education provision. Following the consultation process Committee will then take a decision on whether to create a co-located primary school with pre-school and childcare provision and community hub. This will deliver much needed service provision in the Torry community which is set out in section 5.8 of this report.

The creation of a new primary school in Torry will also ease the capacity pressures currently faced at both Walker Road School and Tullos School and provide spaces for the development of curriculum delivery and pre-school provision at both establishments.

Improving Staff Experience

- 6.3.2 Staff based at the new primary school/community hub will benefit from working in a modern environment. The co-location of services will provide a more holistic approach to service delivery and promote closer communication between agencies.

Improving our use of Resources –

- 6.3.3 Through the co-location of services, the Council and its Community Planning Partners will be able to rationalise its estate, thereby saving financial resources. The building will be designed in such a way as to promote flexible use of the building and to ensure that the building is operational 7 days per week.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 7.1 Should Committee agree the recommendations set out in section 2 of this report, a formal consultation process will follow. The main risk involved at this stage would be the public reaction to the proposal and the chosen site.
- 7.2 Officers have conducted a thorough engagement exercise since April and the conclusions of this work are included in the recommendations set out in this report. During the formal consultation process further engagement will take place with all stakeholders to ensure that Members can make a decision which takes account of all feedback.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Full Council – 25 February 2016 (Agenda Item 2: General Fund Revenue Budget 2016/17 and Non Housing Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2020/21 – CG/16/018)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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