

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education & Children's Services
<b>DATE</b>	16 November 2017
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	St Peter's School – Long Term Educational Provision
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	ECS/17/062
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Gayle Gorman
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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-**

- 1.1 This report provides details and conclusions of the option appraisals carried out in relation to the planning of future options to be considered for the delivery of the long term education provision at St. Peter's Roman Catholic School in Aberdeen as requested by Committee at its meeting on 1 March 2017.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee

(a) considers the outcome of the option appraisal work to date which concluded that:

- The current Riverbank School site is the most viable site for a new build replacement for St. Peter's School, and;
- The current Riverbank School building is the most suitable existing school building for the long term delivery of RC educational provision at St. Peter's, and that within currently available resources this is the most viable option for the future of St Peter's School.

(b) instructs the Director of Education and Children's Services to commence a programme of formal consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and section 22D of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 regarding the proposal to relocate St. Peter's RC School to the current Riverbank School building, once the New Tillydrone Primary School becomes operational, and

(c) instructs the Director of Education and Children's Services to report back to a future meeting of the Committee regarding the outcome of the consultation, which will take place in early 2018.

### **3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

3.1 In response to a report submitted to the Education and Children's Services Committee on 1 March 2017, which summarised the outcomes of a public consultation on proposals to construct a new primary school in Tillydrone, elected members instructed officers to prepare an options appraisal to help determine the long term future of education provision at the existing St Peter's School.

3.2 Officers were also instructed to consider the potential future uses of the existing Riverbank School site with due consideration to the future needs of the communities in this area of the city with regards to education, social care and early learning and childcare provision. This report outlines the work which has been undertaken so far, and the next steps which are required should committee approve the recommendations.

#### **3.3 The existing St Peter's School site**

3.3.1 The main school building on the existing St Peter's School site includes four classrooms, a gym / dining hall, library, general purpose room and offices. Due to continued increases in the pupil roll at the school over a number of years, the library and general purpose room in the main building are currently also used as classrooms.

3.3.2 A further three rooms on the first floor of Old Aberdeen House (which shares the same site) have also been converted for use as classrooms, and a double modular classroom unit has been installed in the playground of the school, to provide an additional two classrooms. There are therefore a total of eleven rooms currently in use as classrooms at the school.

3.3.3 Currently, there is a growing over capacity issue at St. Peter's school; a short term capacity action plan was submitted to the Education & Children's Services committee in June this year detailing a number of actions which will help alleviate these capacity issues in the short term. A number of actions have been successfully completed which have provided improved teaching and ancillary spaces for the pupils and staff of St. Peter's. There is a need to strategically rethink how best we can deliver the future educational provision at St. Peter's school and consider the best options for determining the future sustainability and growth of RC educational provision within the city. Capacity pressures will remain an issue for the future unless we can provide a fit for purpose solution to address this in the long term.

#### **3.4 Option Appraisal (New Build Option)**

3.4.1 Following the instruction from Education & Children's Services Committee in March 2017, a joint working group was established. The working group included the St. Peter's Head Teacher, St. Peter's parent council, The Roman Catholic (RC) Diocese, and various council officers from Communities, Housing & Infrastructure and Education & Children's Services. The purpose of the group was to collectively review the long term educational requirements for St. Peter's and identify site options for a future new build two stream

school. The working group provided opportunities for officers to continue to work collaboratively with St. Peter's Community and the RC Diocese.

3.4.2 Regular meetings of the group were held over the last 5 months to facilitate discussion regarding the initial site selection. The initial site selection was based on the following requirements:

- The site must be within the RC catchment area
- The site area to be a minimum of 1.4 hectares (for the provision of a two stream school plus early learning childcare facilities)

3.4.3 Following this exercise the process of identifying appropriate sites commenced. Initial work was undertaken by the Estates Team using available data bases to identify Council owned sites within the RC zone for St. Peters RC Primary School catchment area. Sites were selected that were either vacant or were likely to become available within a reasonable timescale. This list was supplemented by an additional site that is owned by the University of Aberdeen and extended to privately owned sites.

3.4.4 The eight identified sites were subject to further information gathering (desk top studies, planning and roads input) so that an initial assessment of the options could be undertaken.

3.4.5 The first stage of the options appraisal consisted of clearly defining the criteria against which all of the potential sites would be assessed. The resulting selection criteria were:

- Site Area
- Site Characteristics (Topography)
- Site Characteristics (Ground Conditions)
- Site Location/Neighbourhood
- Site Access: - Roads
- Accessibility (Communications, bus routes etc.)
- Development Potential (Planning Constraints, Ecological Issues)
- Redevelopment Opportunities/Regeneration/Shared Use
- Site Services/Sustainability Issues
- Site Availability/Existing Use
- Site Value/Acquisition Costs/Displacement Costs
- Fit with Service Delivery Model

3.4.6 Under the headings of the main criteria a series of specific points against which sites would be measured were developed.

3.4.7 The sites were assessed and scored by officers from Education and Children's Services and Communities, Housing and Infrastructure in accordance with the evaluation criteria and methodology described. The results of the scoring show that all of the sites assessed are large enough to accommodate a two-stream school with provision of early learning services and all associated external spaces and playing fields. The appraisal however

did highlight that some of the sites may prove challenging to develop due to their shape, topography and site conditions.

3.4.8 Upon conclusion of the new build site scoring exercise, the existing Riverbank School site scored the highest for a new build option with the site at Golf Road scoring second (see appendix 1 site location map).

The other sites considered which did not score as highly were (in no particular order):

- The existing AECC site
- The site of the former Dunbar Halls of Residence
- Land at Froghall Terrace
- The Grandhome housing development
- Land at North Denmore
- Land at North Donside.

3.4.9 The attached map (appendix 1) shows the location of each of these sites. It is important to note that not all of these sites are currently within Council ownership, and they were assessed and scored on the assumption that they would be available to purchase. Any decision to proceed with considerations for these sites would require discussion with the site owners to determine whether or not they would be available for sale.

### **3.5 Option Appraisal (Other Options)**

3.5.1 All other potential options to be duly considered for the future long term education provision at St. Peter's RC School were subject to an additional options appraisal which was conducted by officers from Education & Children's Services and Communities Housing & Infrastructure.

3.5.2 The objectives of the appraisal were:

- To provide a fit for purpose learning establishment suitable for the delivery of the modern curriculum
- To meet the future growing capacity of the RC school zone
- To provide a school within a residential setting in the RC zone.
- To operate from a building that is fit for purpose (suitability rating A or B) and in appropriate condition (rating A or B) which is in line with the Property Framework.
- To provide improved outdoor education

3.5.3 The following options were considered and scored on how they met each of the above objectives (i.e. 3=fully delivers, 2=mostly delivers, 1=delivers to a limited extent, 0=does not deliver and -1 will have a negative impact on objective). This methodology and approach is in accordance with the Council's approved governance arrangements for all capital projects.

- 3.5.4 **Option 1 – Do nothing/minimum:** - “**To continue to deliver St. Peter’s educational provision at its current site**” i.e. at Dunbar Street. Whilst the current ongoing short term action plan will help resolve the current capacity issues at St. Peter’s it will not alleviate future capacity issues which are forecast for future years. This option will not deliver any long term benefits to St. Peter’s and will only continue to be an interim solution. The current location however has well established links to the University and its surrounding area.
- 3.5.5 The ongoing costs that will be generated year on year to help alleviate future capacity issues will be a drain on revenue and capital budgets whilst providing no long term solution or realisation of benefits.
- 3.5.6 If this option is recommended, there is a high likelihood of reputational risk to the Council, as future growing capacity issues would impact negatively on staff, pupils and parents. There are no significant advantages to this option as it will not meet the desired benefits and the long term capacity requirements of St. Peter’s school.
- 3.5.7 **Option 2 – “Reconfigure, Refurbish & extend Old Aberdeen House”:**  
This option looked at reconfiguring, refurbishing and extending Old Aberdeen House, demolishing the existing school building and replacing it with additional playground space.
- 3.5.8 The current overall GIFA (gross internal floor area) of Old Aberdeen House is currently not sufficient for a two stream school which is required for St. Peter’s current and future capacity needs. Additional space (approximately 1,500sqm) in Old Aberdeen House would be required in order to comply with the space regulations for a two stream school. The overall site area (0.8 hectares) just falls short of what is required for a two stream school according to the current 1967 School Premises Regulations (this excludes the provision of playing fields and an Early Year’s service). The current site size is 0.74 hectares.
- 3.5.9 A sensitive reconfiguration/extension would be required to Old Aberdeen House as the building is located in a conservation area and is surrounded by residential properties. This may require additional project delivery time and resource. Due to the fact that it was a former school building, planning in principal would be supported at this stage. Consideration would need to be given to the provision and location of playing fields in close proximity to the site along with Early Years delivery if this option was to be progressed.
- 3.5.10 Currently the condition and suitability of Old Aberdeen House are graded as B however there are various condition works identified to date that will need to be progressed to ensure it is kept to an acceptable standard.
- 3.5.11 Relocation/decant costs of the school alongside the Aberdeenshire Archives Team and the Scientific Services Team which currently occupy Old Aberdeen House would need to be factored into the overall project budget and delivery times.

- 3.5.12 Detailed costs would need to be fully scoped out in line with the proposed design and extension plans.
- 3.5.13 The main risk to this option would be that the new reconfigured school design would not fully meet all aspects of the curriculum for excellence from this site i.e. provision for playing fields and early years education.
- 3.5.14 The main advantage to this option is that the current St Peter's school remains long term at its current site which strengthens the well-established links to the University of Aberdeen and the Old Aberdeen community.
- 3.5.15 The main disadvantage to this option is that no provision of playing fields / multi-use games areas and early years provision cannot be provided on site due to the current site constraints.
- 3.5.16 **Option 3 – “Relocate St. Peter’s RC school into Riverbank School building” (post completion of the new Tillydrone School):** The current Riverbank school building has a capacity for a two stream school with an overall site area of 1.52 hectares. The adjoining site which also sits under Education has an area of 0.52 hectares which could be used for any future required extension to the school should it be required. The current building includes a recent modular extension comprising modern classrooms, general purpose space, and toilet and cloakroom facilities. Its current capacity of 420 would cater for St. Peter's expanding roll.
- 3.5.17 The overall condition rating is B. Within the condition survey there are no elements of the building which fall into a C or D category which means that there are no current capital requirements for improving the condition of the building however, there may be ad hoc ongoing repairs and maintenance items required to maintain the condition of the building. Suitability of the building is also a category B and no significant issues have been identified.
- 3.5.18 **Potential Future Uses of the Riverbank School/site:**
- As this property is an operational school which was purpose built, our Estates Team has advised there is currently no known demand for the property out with Education & Children Services.
- 3.5.19 The planning of our expansion of Early Learning and Childcare provision is currently underway and it is recognised that Tillydrone will have a high demand and need for this service to meet the current growing population of under 5s in the area. It is envisaged that future provision of ELC will be delivered at the new Tillydrone School alongside some provision at the new Community Hub. If additional provision is required (depending on overall demand and uptake) to deliver the expanded offer in Tillydrone, the vacated Riverbank School could be a viable option however this is difficult to determine at this point in time.
- 3.5.20 **Current Market Demand:** Due to the ongoing challenges in the residential property market, the Council's Estates Team has advised that currently there

would be limited demand for this site from private housing developers with the likely interested purchasers being social landlords. Although difficult to project future demand over the next 3 years, it is recognised that this position would not significantly change in the near future.

- 3.5.21 The Estates Team has carried out a valuation of this site should the Council wish to consider sale of the site on the open market once declared vacant and surplus to requirement. The current market value (with achievement of planning for residential purposes) is currently deemed relatively low and any potential planning obligations, demolition and further abnormal demolition costs would reduce the overall value.
- 3.5.22 Any costs associated with future suitability/condition would be determined once a scope of works (feasibility study) was carried out. Decant costs would need to be accounted for. This option would release an asset but there would also be an opportunity cost of the Riverbank site.
- 3.5.23 The main advantage of this option is that it would address the long term capacity issues of St. Peter's RC school and it would remain within the current RC zone.
- 3.5.24 It should be noted however that this option was strongly opposed to at a St. Peter's community consultation in November 2016 and therefore may be met with dissatisfaction by the St Peter's community. The community highlighted several issues regarding this option; reference was made to the lack of available public transport links to Tillydrone from King Street, the increased walking distances for pupils living in the Seaton area, alongside the risk of losing the strong established links with the University if this option was pursued. The option was also opposed by the RC Diocese of Aberdeen.
- 3.5.25 **Option 4 – “To build a new two stream school on a suitable site within the current RC school zone”:** As detailed earlier in this report, a separate options appraisal was carried out to determine the feasibility of a new build option for St. Peter's RC school. The purpose of this study was to carry out an appraisal of various sites located in the existing catchment area of St. Peter's RC Primary School, to assess their suitability to replace and increase the overall education capacity at St. Peter's RC Primary School. Desk top studies formed part of this appraisal study which informed initial site conditions to be taken into consideration at this stage. Following the assessment and scoring of each site (eight in total), a ranking order of sites was determined which highlighted the most viable sites for taking forward to the next stage. The two sites that scored the highest were the Riverbank site (as a cleared site) and the site at Golf Road.
- 3.5.26 A full budget cost report would be required to determine the exact capital cost required for a new build for St. Peter's RC school. This would need to consider both the future capital and revenue requirements. The updated Non-Housing Capital programme was approved by the Finance, Policy & Resources committee on 9 March 2017, committing available financial resources to the current project list. The overall programme and available financial resources would need to be reassessed if an emerging project was deemed to have a higher priority than the currently approved projects.

Currently the Non-Housing Capital programme is fully committed until financial year 2021/22.

- 3.5.27 The main advantage of this option is that a purpose new built school would be designed to meet the long term requirements of St. Peter's. Whole life cycle maintenance costs alongside energy costs could be potentially reduced if factored into the new build design. This would ensure maximum efficiency of our Schools Estate in the future.
- 3.5.28 **Option 5 – “Relocate to a former school premises or other non-council owned available property”**: This option identified the former Bucksburn school building which is currently empty following relocation to the new Brimmond School in October 2015. However, due to the size of the building it does not meet the criteria requirements and therefore was discounted.
- 3.5.29 Similarly, once the new Stoneywood school opens next year, this building and site will become available. Due to the constraints of the building and site, this option was also discounted.
- 3.5.30 Our Estates Team has undertaken a review of the open market and have been unable to identify any appropriate buildings currently on the market for sale or lease in the RC catchment zone which could be adapted for use by the Council for a school of this size. It is anticipated that this is likely to remain the status quo over the next few years.
- 3.5.31 **Scoring and Ranking of Options**: The options were assessed and scored by Officers from Education and Children's Services and Communities, Housing and Infrastructure in accordance with the evaluation criteria and methodology described. The results of the scoring were as follows:

Joint first ranking were options 3 & 4 -

1. **Option 3**: Relocate St. Peter's RC school into Riverbank School building – **15 points**
1. **Option 4**: To build a new two stream school on a suitable site within the current RC school zone: - **15 points**
2. **Option 2**: Reconfigure, Refurbish & extend Old Aberdeen House - **11 points**
3. **Option 5**: Relocate to a former school premises or other non-council owned available property = **6 points**
4. **Option 1**: Do nothing/do minimum – **1 point**

#### **4.0 Conclusions & Recommendations:**

- 4.1 Having duly considered both the overall conclusions and scoring of the option appraisal work to date and the Council's fully committed capital programme until 2022, it is recommended that the Committee -
- (a) considers the outcome of the option appraisal work to date which concluded that:

- The current Riverbank School site is the most viable site for a new build replacement for St. Peter's School, and;
  - The current Riverbank School building is the most suitable existing school building for the long term delivery of RC educational provision at St. Peter's, and that within currently available resources this is the most viable option for the future of St Peter's School.
- (b) instructs the Director of Education and Children's Services to commence a programme of formal consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and section 22D of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 regarding the proposal to relocate St. Peter's RC School to the current Riverbank School building, once the New Tillydrone Primary School becomes operational, and
- (c) instructs the Director of Education and Children's Services to report back to a future meeting of the Committee regarding the outcome of the consultation, which will take place in early 2018.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Any future costs associated with future options described in this report will need to be further evaluated and reported on once an approved final option has been determined.

## **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Should Council approve the recommendations set out in section 2 of this report, the formal consultation process will comply fully with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and section 22D of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended.
- 6.2 It is also necessary to submit the proposal to Scottish Ministers for their consent in accordance with section 22D of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as the proposal involves the change of site of a denominational school.

## **7.0 MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

### **7.1 Reputational Risks**

- 7.2 There is a high likelihood of reputational risk to the Council if the long term educational provision at St. Peter's School is further delayed, as future capacity issues at the school would likely impact negatively on staff, pupils and parents.
- 7.3 Should Committee agree the recommendations set out in section 2 of this report; a formal consultation process will follow. Stakeholder feedback received from the previous consultation on the future of St Peter's School, in November 2016, demonstrated a strong opposition amongst the St Peter's

School community to proposals to relocate St Peter's School to the current Riverbank School building. There is therefore a high likelihood that a similar response could be received if similar proposals are put forwards in any new consultation.

- 7.4 **Financial Risks:** There are no financial risks arising directly from the recommendations in this report.
- 7.5 **Employee Risks:** There are no employee risks arising directly from the recommendations in this report.
- 7.6 **Customer/Citizen:** See paragraph 7.3; there is a risk that the recommended proposal could be strongly opposed to.
- 7.7 **Environmental Risks:** There are no environmental risks arising directly from the recommendations in this report.
- 7.8 **Technological Risks:** There are no technological risks arising directly from the recommendations in this report.
- 7.9 **Legal Risks:** There is no legal risk arising directly from the recommendations in this report. Should Council approve the recommendations set out in section 2 of this report, the formal consultation process will comply fully with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and section 22D of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended.

## **8.0 IMPACT SECTION**

### **8.1 People**

8.2 Determining the best option for the long term educational provision at St. Peter's School which will impact positively on the pupils and staff in the long term. This will assist the school in continuing to deliver high quality learning and teaching.

8.3 An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been submitted for this report but will be revisited once the statutory consultation has been completed.

### **8.4 Place**

8.5 Implementation of the recommendations described in this report will help determine and improve the physical environment in the long term for St Peter's School.

### **8.6 Economy**

There are no direct implications on the economy arising from the recommendations in this report.

## 8.7 Technology

There are no direct implications on technology arising from the recommendations in this report

## 9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Committee Report to E&CS, March 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 - “Statutory Consultation – Consultation Report on the proposals to develop new primary school provision with early education and childcare facilities in Tillydrone” – March 1<sup>st</sup> 2017

## 10.0 APPENDICES

- **Appendix 1:** Location map of new build sites

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