

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education & Children's Services
DATE	25 January 2018
REPORT TITLE	Removal of sites from Education and Children's Services property portfolio
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/18/013
DIRECTOR	Helen Shanks (acting)
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 This report provides details of a number of Education and Children's Services sites which are considered as surplus to requirements, and makes recommendations for removing these from the service property portfolio.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee declares the following sites as surplus to Education and Children's Services requirements, and instructs the Head of Policy, Performance and Resources to make the necessary arrangements for them to be removed from the Education and Children's Services property portfolio, and for responsibility for the sites to be transferred the Head of Land and Property Assets:

(i) the former Hazlewood School building;

(ii) the former Bucksburn School and Nursery building;

(iii) the existing Stoneywood School building (to take effect following the opening of the replacement Stoneywood School building scheduled to open in August 2018); and:

(iv) the existing Kincorth Academy building (to take effect following the opening of the new Lochside Academy building, scheduled to open in August 2018).

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

3.1 The former Hazlewood School building

3.1.1 Hazlewood School closed in June 2017, when pupils and staff transferred to the new Orchard Brae School. Officers have considered potential future uses of the building and have determined that it would be prudent to declare it surplus to Education and Children's Services requirements. Doing this would provide opportunities for other Council services to identify other uses for the building or site, or for the site to be placed on the market in order to achieve a capital receipt for the Council.

3.1.2 Woodlands School also closed in June 2017, with its staff and pupils also transferring to the new Orchard Brae School. However officers have identified a potential opportunity to use the former Woodlands School building for early years and childcare provision, to help meet the additional demand for places resulting from the national expansion of early learning and childcare entitlements. A business case for using the building in this way is currently being developed, and consequently the former Woodlands building is not recommended as being surplus to requirement at this stage.

3.2 The former Bucksburn School and Bucksburn Nursery buildings

3.2.1 The former Bucksburn School and Nursery buildings share the same site, and were used latterly as a temporary location for Brimmond School, which was formed following the merger of Bucksburn School and Newhills School. Pupils and staff transferred to the new Brimmond School building when it opened in October 2016, and the former Bucksburn School and Nursery buildings have remained vacant since that time.

3.2.2 Officers have considered potential future uses of the site and have determined that it would now be prudent to declare it surplus to Education and Children's Services requirements. Doing this would provide opportunities for other Council services to identify other uses for the site, or for it to be placed on the market in order to achieve a capital return receipt for the Council.

3.3 The existing Stoneywood School building

3.3.1 A new Stoneywood School building is currently under construction, and is due to open in August 2018, when pupils and staff from the existing building will transfer to the new site. The existing Stoneywood School building is therefore due to close in June 2018.

3.3.2 Officers have considered potential future uses of the existing site, following the opening of the new building. The condition of the existing building is rated as C (Poor), and considerable investment would be required to return it to a suitable standard. Officers have therefore determined that it would now be prudent to declare the building surplus to Education and Children's Services requirements. Doing this would provide opportunities for other Council services to identify other uses for the site, or for it to be placed on the market in order to achieve a capital return for the Council.

3.4 The Kincorth Academy building

3.4.1 The new Lochside Academy building is currently under construction, and is due to open in August 2018, when pupils from Kincorth Academy will transfer

to the new site. Kincorth Academy will then be permanently closed from June 2018.

3.4.2 Officers have considered potential future uses of the existing school site, following the opening of Lochside Academy, and have determined that it would be prudent to declare the building surplus to Education and Children's Services requirements. The site has been identified for future housing development, and so declaring the site surplus at this stage would assist officers in progressing plans for that development.

3.4.3 Torry Academy will also close in June 2018 as pupils from that school will also transfer to the new Lochside Academy. However the Education and Children's Services Committee has already given approval for the Torry Academy site to be used for the planned new primary school in Torry, and consequently the Torry Academy site will need to be retained by Education and Children's Services.

3.5 Procedure for declaring sites surplus

3.5.1 Should the committee agree to the recommendation to declare the above sites surplus to Education and Children's Services requirement, the buildings would be cleared of their contents and the assets would be transferred to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure directorate. Officers within that directorate would then follow the Council's surplus property procedures to determine the future use or disposal of the sites.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 As assets cease to become operational, certain property costs will remain until such time as the asset is sold, leased out or demolished. A summary of these expected costs are shown in Appendix 1, along with the costs of running the schools whilst in operational use.

4.2 The ongoing repair costs of buildings are difficult to assess but are likely to be limited to security and health and safety works. Budget provision for ongoing costs will need to be made so that the assets can be managed accordingly. Officers within Communities, Housing and Infrastructure would consider the future of the assets in accordance with the Council's surplus property procedures and would look to mitigate ongoing property costs where possible.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Financial

6.1 The financial implications which relate to the recommendations in this report are explained in Section 4, above. There is a higher risk of vandalism occurring on sites and buildings when they become vacant, and the risk tends

to increase the longer that vacant buildings remain in place. Any vandalism is likely to result in an increase in costs to the Council.

- 6.2 The ongoing security of all vacant sites is considered on an individual basis, and where appropriate consideration will be given to boarding up windows and doors, additional security fencing, and regular inspections of the properties.

Employee

- 6.3 There are no significant risks relating to employees arising from the recommendations in this report.

Customer / citizen

- 6.4 There are no significant risks relating to customers / citizens arising from the recommendations in this report.

Environmental

- 6.5 There are no significant environmental risks arising from the recommendations in this report.

Technological

- 6.6 There are no significant technological risks arising from the recommendations in this report.

Legal

- 6.7 There are no significant legal risks arising from the recommendations in this report.

Reputational

- 6.8 There are no significant legal risks arising from the recommendations in this report.

7. IMPACT SECTION

Economy

- 7.1 There are no significant impacts on the economy associated with these proposals.

People

- 7.2 Declaring the sites surplus would provide opportunities for the future use of the sites and buildings to be considered, which may lead to benefits for local communities, which otherwise would not be realised if the buildings were to remain vacant and unused.

Place

- 7.3 The increased risk of vandalism occurring on vacant sites, as described in paragraph 6.1 above, and the need to board up windows and doors on vacant buildings, can impact negatively on the local environment and the local community. Declaring vacant sites surplus at the earliest opportunity allows for decisions to be taken more quickly on the future of the sites, and therefore helps to minimise the time that a building or site remains vacant.

Technology

- 7.4 There are no significant impacts on technology associated with these proposals.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers associated with this document.

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

Appendix 1: Outline of running costs for proposed surplus sites

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APPENDIX 1: Running costs for proposed surplus sites

Asset	Business Rates	Energy	Water	Cleaning	Grounds Maintenance	Repairs / Maintenance	Waste Collection
Hazlewood	£ -	£ 42,525	£ 6,197	£ 19,729	£ 5,031	£ 27,386	£ 3,510
Hazlewood - Vacant	£ 27,030	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 5,031	Unknown	£ -
Bucksburn Operational	£ 35,909	£ 36,360	£ 3,284	£ 29,327	£ 4,670	£ 22,337	£ 3,644
Bucksburn Vacant	£ 37,995	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 4,670	Unknown	£ -
Stoneywood Operational	£ 20,213	£ 23,877	£ 2,865	£ 17,063	£ 1,819	£ 21,954	£ 2,062
Stoneywood Vacant	£ 18,192	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,819	Unknown	£ -
Kincorth Operational	£ 151,348	£ 159,709	£ 22,131	£ 99,178	£ 17,767	£ 98,117	£ 19,134
Kincorth Vacant	£ 136,213	£ -	£ -		£ 17,767	Unknown	£ -

NB: energy and water costs for vacant properties would be zero only when complete disconnection takes place. There are costs associated with disconnection of services which the Council would be required to meet.