

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	14 March 2019
REPORT TITLE	School Estate Review Scoping Report
REPORT NUMBER	RES/19/199
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
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TERMS OF REFERENCE	Purpose 1; Remit 1.1, 3, 5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the intended scope, aims and principles of the planned 2019 School Estate Strategy document, and to seek approval of proposed updated primary school capacity figures.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 notes the planned scope, aims and principles and findings so far from the development of the 2019 School Estate Strategy, which will be presented to the Committee for approval in September 2019; and
- 2.2 approves the adoption of revised pupil capacity figures for primary schools in Aberdeen, as detailed at Appendix 1 of this report, with the revised figures to be used in the next and all future editions of Aberdeen City Council's school roll forecasts, in order to inform the further development of the School Estate Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting of 17 January 2019, the Education Operational Delivery Committee agreed to note that officers intended to bring the School Estate Strategy report back to Committee in September 2019. The Committee also instructed officers to bring a report to the Committee on 14 March 2019, outlining the precise terms of the scope of work that is being carried out in reviewing the school estate, the findings so far of the audit, the aims, principles

and policies of the review process and the timescale of consultation and decision making. This report seeks to fulfil that instruction.

3.2 Progress Since the Previous Reviews

3.2.1 The last widespread reviews of the school estate in Aberdeen were undertaken in 2010 (for the secondary school estate) and in 2013 (for the primary school estate). These reviews led to a number of decisions regarding major changes to the school estate which included:

- Eighteen separate rezoning exercises, including statutory consultations, to adjust school catchment zones within specified areas of the city, to ensure efficiency and sufficiency of the school estate - undertaken and implemented between 2013 and 2017
- Refurbishment and reconfiguration of Walker Road School, to create additional floorspace, completed in August 2015
- Replacement of Bucksburn School and Newhills School, with the new Brimmond School which opened in October 2015
- Extension of Greenbrae School to create additional capacity to accommodate new housing developments, completed in October 2016
- Additional capacity created at Fernielea School to accommodate new housing developments, completed in Summer 2018
- Replacement of Torry Academy and Kincorth Academy, with the new Lochside Academy which opened in August 2018
- Replacement of Stoneywood School with a new building, which opened in August 2018

3.2.2 In addition to the above, a replacement Milltimber School building, and a new primary school building for Countesswells, were recommended within the 2013 primary school estate review report. At its meeting on 12 September 2018 the Capital Programme Committee gave its approval to proceed to detailed design stage for these projects, and also for a replacement Riverbank School building and a new primary school and community hub at Torry. Design work is currently under way for all four of these projects.

3.3 Scope, Aims and Principles

Scope and Aims

3.3.1 The new School Estate Strategy, to be presented to Committee for approval in September 2019, will provide an overview of all operational school buildings in Aberdeen City, including all planned new school buildings which have been approved to design stage.

- 3.3.2 The document will consider the current state of and future requirements for individual school buildings, whilst also looking at the wider issues at a locality level. Through analysing the available data, the strategy will seek to identify the priorities for the future of the school estate, and will provide options for the future development of schools, Associated Schools Groups (ASGs) and the estate as a whole.
- 3.3.3 These priorities and options for addressing them will be determined through adopting a set of key principles, which will reflect the way in which we wish to plan and shape the school estate in Aberdeen over the next 5 to 15 years, and beyond. These principles are summarised below:

Principle 1: Maintaining Quality

- 3.3.4 Our existing school estate consists of a diverse range of buildings, dating from the Victorian era through to our newest school buildings completed in 2018, and benefiting from the most modern design and construction methodologies. Consequently the relative condition and suitability of our buildings vary considerably. Our challenge is to ensure equity of access to high quality learning and teaching for all our pupils, regardless of the buildings in which they learn.
- 3.3.5 This requires a commitment to maintaining and developing the condition and suitability of our existing school estate, as well as investing in brand new buildings where appropriate, to ensure the highest possible standards across the estate as a whole.
- 3.3.6 A key principle of the School Estate Strategy, therefore, will be to identify opportunities to improve our existing buildings, in order to ensure that our school estate remains in either “Good” or “Satisfactory” condition.

Principle 2: Maintaining Efficiency

- 3.3.7 With a diverse estate made up of buildings constructed in the Victorian era through to our most recent schools conforming to modern environmental standards, the cost of running our buildings can vary considerably. Inefficient buildings have a significant impact on revenue budgets, which inevitably impacts on the funding that is available to support learning and teaching.
- 3.3.8 The School Estate Strategy will therefore include a focus on identifying priorities for improving the overall efficiency of the estate.

Principle 3: Maintaining Sufficiency

- 3.3.9 A key measure of the school estate is its capacity to accommodate the anticipated number of pupils expected to require school places in any given year. Insufficient capacity in schools can lead to overcrowding which frequently results in a negative impact on outcomes for learners. Additional costs can also be incurred, through the need to provide additional space at short notice to ensure the Council can fulfil its statutory duties to provide education, or in transporting children to the nearest school where places are available.

- 3.3.10 Conversely, schools which are significantly under-capacity tend to be inefficient, as the cost-per-pupil in running and staffing the building increases. A key aim of the School Estate Strategy, therefore, will be to ensure that schools remain at optimum sufficiency levels, through maintaining pupil numbers at between 85% and 100% of the school's available capacity, wherever possible.
- 3.3.11 Plans for the future school estate will therefore need to take this target into account, and options for increasing school capacity where it is required, and finding alternative uses for any available spare capacity, will also be identified within the Strategy document.
- 3.3.12 To ensure that forecasts of future school sufficiency levels are as accurate as possible, updates to the current pupil capacity figures for our schools are proposed. Details of this are provided in Section 3.5, below.

Principle 4: Co-Location of Services

- 3.3.13 It is widely recognised that partnerships and collaborations are essential for successful delivery of services for early childhood, education and care. Where there is a requirement to add new buildings to the estate, and where it is appropriate to do so, an aspiration of the School Estate Strategy will be to provide access to high quality facilities for a range of purposes at a single location.
- 3.3.14 Priorities for the school estate will therefore include a focus on encouraging the shared use of facilities by the community, and potential collaboration with public service partners, where there is a need to service a broader range of community needs at a single location.
- 3.3.15 This approach will also assist in ensuring that our buildings are run as efficiently as possible, through maximising the use of the available space and potentially generating additional sources of income to the Council from external partners.

Principle 5: Community Consultation

- 3.3.16 The Council's new Target Operating Model has been designed to enable a modern collaborative approach to place leadership, where there is effective community engagement which builds a strong involvement in place making from the people who live and work here.
- 3.3.17 In addition, the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires local authorities to consult communities and stakeholders on proposed changes to schools.
- 3.3.18 With this in mind, stakeholders will be invited and encouraged to comment on the options for developing the school estate which will be contained within the approved School Estate Strategy. Following approval of the Strategy in September, it is intended that informal stakeholder engagement will be undertaken to help scope out and further develop the options identified within the Strategy document, and to help assess the extent to which each option

meets community needs. Formal statutory consultation will then be carried out where this is required, before any final recommendations on proposed changes to the school estate are submitted for approval.

Principle 6 – Ongoing Review

- 3.3.19 Rather than being seen as a static document, the intention is for the School Estate Strategy to continually evolve, with updates to be provided annually, ensuring that over time the options and priorities identified within the document, which will ultimately become detailed recommendations to Committee, continue to reflect as widely as possible the developing needs of the communities and citizens of Aberdeen.
- 3.3.20 Regular updates to the document will also allow for the most recently available data to be used for forward planning, and to ensure that the estate can operate as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- 3.3.21 This continuous planning approach will also allow officers to continue to engage with and work alongside local communities, to gather feedback from stakeholders on the priorities and actions which require to be taken in individual localities, and in turn to develop and improve the school estate in a way which best meets the needs of the people it is there to serve.
- 3.3.22 Priorities within the School Estate Strategy will be organised into options to be implemented in the short term (1-2 years), medium term (3-5 years) and long term (5-10 years). Through successive updates and reviews of the strategy document, longer term priorities can be continually re-assessed and refined, to suit the changing needs of our schools and young people.

School Estate Strategy Group

- 3.3.23 To support the development and monitoring of the Strategy, at its meeting of 4 March 2019, Council established a Working Group consisting of the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord, 6 headteachers and members of the Education Operation Delivery Committee (2 Administration, 1 Opposition, 1 lay member), to contribute to the development of the School Estate Strategy, through scrutinising the data to help refine and present detailed options within the final strategy document to be presented to Committee in September.
- 3.3.24 It is proposed that the group will meet at key points each year to review progress against the implementation of the strategy and the actions which have been identified within it. The group will continue to monitor and scrutinise the latest available data to support the estate planning process, considering the outcomes of engagement and consultation activities which have taken place in local communities, and identifying new priorities and required actions for individual schools and localities, which will then be captured in subsequent updates to the School Estate Strategy document.

3.4 Outcomes of the Review of the School Estate

- 3.4.1 An audit of the existing school estate was carried out in 2018, to help inform the development of a detailed strategy for managing and improving the school estate in the future.
- 3.4.2 This has highlighted that, whilst the current school estate currently meets overall demand for pupil places across the city, changing demographics in Aberdeen mean that we no longer necessarily have schools in the right places. Schools in some parts of the city where pupil populations are falling, are operating under capacity, whilst in other areas the demand for school places is rising, and schools are over-subscribed.
- 3.4.3 In addition, the Council's Local Development Plan includes allocations of land for up to 17,000 new homes in the city from 2017 to 2026, and through its Strategic Housing Investment Plan the Council intends to deliver over 2000 units of affordable housing over the next five years. These plans will inevitably impact on the school estate, as future pupil populations and demand for school places in some areas of the city will increase.
- 3.4.4 Further detailed analysis of the planned housing developments over the coming years and their likely impact on the school estate is required, in order to inform the options and recommendations for actions to be taken over the short, medium and long term. These options will be included within the School Estate Strategy to be presented to Committee in September.

3.5 Review of School Pupil Capacity Figures

- 3.5.1 The maximum capacity figures for the city's primary schools, currently used within the Council's school roll forecasts document, were agreed by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 7 January 2010. The primary school estate, and the way in which buildings are used to deliver the curriculum, has changed considerably since that time, and the capacity figures which were calculated in 2010 are no longer considered to be a reflection of the space that is required in our primary schools.
- 3.5.2 In October 2014, the Scottish Government published new guidance entitled "*Determining Primary School Capacity*" which outlined a recommended methodology for calculating primary school capacity, taking into account a variety of factors including changes in school design, and the introduction of a Curriculum for Excellence. Calculations are carried out based on the number of teaching spaces in a school, physical measurements and class size maxima, resulting in a total planning capacity for each school.
- 3.5.3 Revised planning capacity figures for primary schools in Aberdeen City have therefore been calculated using the Scottish Government guidance, and are presented within Appendix 1 of this report. The next edition of the school roll forecasts is due to be published in Summer 2019, and if approved by Committee, the revised figures would be included in this and all future editions of the forecasts. This would allow the updated forecasts to be used as a basis

for developing more accurate proposals within the School Estate Strategy document to be presented in September.

- 3.5.4 As the School Estate Strategy is developed, officers also propose to take the opportunity to review the current capacity figures for secondary schools, with a focus on classroom efficiency rates (i.e. the proportion of classrooms in the school which are expected to be in use for learning and teaching at any one time).
- 3.5.5 The efficiency rates, which are used to help ensure there is sufficient flexibility in a school's timetable, will directly affect the overall pupil capacity of the school. The current rates were agreed by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee in January 2010, and it is felt that it would now be prudent to review the efficiency rates to check whether they are still appropriate and suitable for current curriculum delivery methods. Any recommendation to make changes to these figures will be included within the School Estate Strategy report to be presented to Committee in September 2019.

3.6 Timescales

- 3.6.1 It is anticipated that the remaining work to develop the School Estates Strategy will follow the below noted timeline:

Mar 19: Presentation of the planned scope, aims and principles to the Education Operational Delivery Committee

Initial meeting of the School Estate Strategy Group – agree terms of reference and aims and objectives of the group

Mar-Jun 19: Identification of potential options for individual schools and ASGs, to help achieve the agreed strategy principles

Jun 19: Second meeting of the School Estate Strategy Group – to consider emerging options and agree initial priorities and recommendations for the School Estate Strategy

Jul-Aug 19: Finalise School Estate Strategy document for presentation to Committee

Sept 19: Present final School Estate Strategy document to Education Operational Delivery Committee and Capital Programme Committee for approval

Sept 19 onwards: Community engagement and continual review and implementation of the School Estate Strategy, subject to committee approval

3.7 Duty of Due Regard

- 3.7.1 The Duty of Due Regard places a legal responsibility on public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.
- 3.7.2 In formulating a strategy for engaging and consulting with communities on the future of the school estate, officers will be required to pay due regard to the likely impact of its consultation work within areas of the city with higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage, and where necessary make adjustments to the approach to be taken, in order to maximise opportunities for all stakeholders to participate.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that it shall be the duty of every education authority to secure that there is made for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education.
- 5.2 Section 17 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that it shall be the duty of an education authority in the performance of their functions under sections 1 to 6 of the Act, to provide for their area, sufficient accommodation in public schools and other educational establishments under their management to enable them to perform their said functions. In addition, an education authority shall maintain and keep efficient every public school, and other educational establishment under their management, and shall from time to time provide such additional accommodation as may be necessary to enable them to perform their functions under the Act and may, provide, alter, improve, enlarge, equip and maintain schools and other educational establishments within their area.
- 5.3 The development of the School Estate Strategy in line with the principles outlined in this report will assist in fulfilling the above duties incumbent upon the Education Authority.
- 5.4 A proposal to make changes to a school, including closing, relocating or opening a school, is subject to consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Formal consultations will require to be carried out for any proposals to make these types of changes to schools, and consideration of this will be given in future recommendations arising from the School Estate Strategy.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	None	N/A	N/A
Employee	None	N/A	N/A
Technology	None	N/A	N/A
Environment	None	N/A	N/A
Legal	<p>Failure to plan effectively for the school estate, leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate and effective provision</p> <p>Failure to consult formally with stakeholders on changes to schools would be in breach of legislation</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>The School Estate Strategy will set out priorities for the school estate and proposals for continually monitoring and updating plans will ensure adequate and effective provision is maintained</p> <p>Any proposed changes to schools arising from the School Estate Strategy will incorporate plans for statutory consultation</p>
Customer	Failure to engage and consult with communities on the future of the school estate which serves them, could lead to a breakdown in relationships with community members	M	The School Estate Strategy will emphasises the need for community engagement and consultation
Reputational	Failure to engage and consult with communities on the future of the school estate which serves them, could lead to reputational damage for the Council.	M	The School Estate Strategy will emphasises the need for community engagement and consultation

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Through investment in our school infrastructure, we can help deliver on the priority to ensure that Aberdeen prospers.
Prosperous People	Through ensuring children have access to high quality facilities, we can assist in ensuring they have the best start in life, that they are safe and responsible, and respected, included, and achieving.
Prosperous Place	Through engaging and consulting with communities on the future of the school estate within their localities, we can help to develop empowered, resilient and sustainable communities.
Enabling Technology	By making use of technology throughout our school estate, and through ensuring our buildings benefit from digital connectivity, we can contribute to the development of children's digital skills and education.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Partnerships and Alliances	The approaches to community engagement and consultation outlined within this report will enable more effective collaboration with communities and lead to more successful outcomes.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Full EHRIA not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Applicable - see section 3.7 of the report

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 7 January 2010 : *Revision of School Capacities*
- Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 28 October 2010 : *21st Century Secondary School Provision*
- Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 7 February 2013 : *Nursery/Primary School Estate Review*
- Education Operational Delivery Committee, 17 January 2019: Committee Decision Sheet Item 3 (ii).
- Scottish Government, 2014 : *Determining Primary School Capacity* - www.gov.scot/publications/determining-primary-school-capacity-guidance/
- Aberdeen City Council, 2017: *Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017* - https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/LDP_WS_20170328.pdf
- Aberdeen City Council, 2018: *Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24* - www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/Strategic%20Housing%20Investment%20Plan.pdf

10. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Proposed revised primary school capacity figures

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 1– Proposed Revised Primary School Planning Capacity Figures

School	Current Published Capacity	Revised Planning Capacity	Percentage Change
Abbotswell	300	292	-2.7%
Airyhall	393	434	+10.4%
Ashley Road	415	434	+4.6%
Braehead	279	292	+4.7%
Bramble Brae	198	217	+9.6%
Brimmond	420	459	+9.3%
Broomhill	420	459	+9.3%
Charleston	300	292	-2.7%
Cornhill	420	459	+9.3%
Culter	420	459	+9.3%
Cults	540	559	+3.5%
Danestone	330	342	+3.6%
Dyce	523	534	+2.1%
Fernielea	399	434	+8.8%
Ferryhill	387	434	+12.1%
Forehill	360	367	+1.9%
Gilcomstoun	240	228	-5.0%
Glashieburn	420	428	+1.9%
Greenbrae	342	342	+/-0.0%
Hanover Street	240	242	+0.8%
Hazlehead	360	367	+1.9%
Heathryburn	279	292	+4.7%
Holy Family RC	180	180	+/-0.0%
Kaimhill	198	242	+22.2%

School	Current Published Capacity	Revised Planning Capacity	Percentage Change
Kingsford	387	367	-5.2%
Kingswells	442	434	-1.8%
Kirkhill	330	342	+3.6%
Kittybrewster	300	342	+14.0%
Loirston	480	459	-4.4%
Manor Park	252	292	+15.9%
Middleton Park	240	237	-1.3%
Mile End	415	434	+4.6%
Milltimber	270	267	-1.1%
Muirfield	360	342	-5.0%
Quarryhill	390	367	-5.9%
Riverbank	420	434	+3.3%
Scotstown	300	292	-2.7%
Seaton	198	242	+22.2%
Skene Square	420	434	+3.3%
St Josephs	420	434	+3.3%
St Peter's RC	198	217	+9.6%
Stoneywood	434	434	+/-0.0%
Sunnybank	360	367	+1.9%
Tullos	360	367	+1.9%
Walker Road	420	434	+3.3%
Westpark	360	367	+1.9%
Woodside	420	434	+3.3%