

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	3 March 2021
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	School Estate Plan: Process and timeline for delivery
REPORT NUMBER	RES/21/065
DIRECTOR	Resources
CHIEF OFFICER	Corporate Landlord
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Intro. 6

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the process and timeline for delivering the School Estate Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council :-

- 2.1 Notes the process and timeline required to be followed in delivering the School Estate Plan, as set out in this report, and instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to present the finalised School Estate Plan to the Education Operational Delivery Committee in Summer 2022, in line with this timetable.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 6 March 2018, Council instructed the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to present a report on the review of the school estate to the Education Operational Delivery Committee, and a number of updates have subsequently been provided to elected members relating to progress on fulfilling that instruction. Most recently an update was included in the committee business planner for the Education Operational Delivery Committee, prior to its meeting on 20 January 2021, which advised that the school estate report should be deferred to Summer 2022, due to the impact of the pandemic.
- 3.2 In response to this, the Education Operational Delivery Committee agreed at its 20 January meeting to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the next meeting of the Committee, rather than in June 2022 as outlined in the committee business planner. Officers have however determined that it will not be possible to present a final school estate plan to the next meeting of the Education Operational Delivery Committee, given the impact of the pandemic and also due to a number of key sets of data, which will inform the final school estate plan, requiring to be updated.
- 3.3 This report explains the reasons why additional time is required to finalise the school estate plan, and sets out the process and timeline which require to be

followed, to deliver a full and accurate school estate plan for committee approval.

Response to the Pandemic

- 3.4 The events of the past year have required officers in the School Estate Team to prioritise their time and resources in supporting the response to the pandemic, preparing school buildings for safe reopening after the initial lockdown in Spring / Summer 2020. This required officers within the team to devote almost all of their time between May and August, in developing and contributing to local guidance for schools colleagues, and working directly with every head teacher to develop detailed recovery plans and risk assessments for each school, based on the latest available national guidance.
- 3.5 Following the reopening of schools in August, the team was required to continue working closely with colleagues in Children's Services and in schools, to monitor the effectiveness of the control measures which were in place in ensuring the buildings remained safe for pupils and staff, and to provide further advice and guidance as the situation developed, for example in creating guidance and procedures for measuring classroom ventilation levels.
- 3.6 This meant that work to develop the school estate plan, which would otherwise have continued this year, was placed on hold, and consequently the plan has not yet been finalised.

Supporting Data

- 3.7 The final school estate plan will provide elected members with a series of recommendations on actions to be taken to improve the school estate in all areas of the city, in the short, medium and long term. To ensure that elected members have all of the information necessary to help them make their decisions, it will be important for the school estate plan to be underpinned by the most accurate and up-to-date data available. The underlying data which was used originally as the plan started to take shape, is no longer current. Officers are keen to avoid presenting recommendations to elected members on potentially significant changes to the school estate based on data which may no longer be accurate.
- 3.8 A number of separate workstreams are currently ongoing which will provide updated information relating to the school estate, and officers recommend that it would be prudent to wait until this information is available, before presenting the final school estate plan for approval. For example, there is a need to consider the latest running cost information for each school building, so that the relative efficiency of school buildings can be presented within the school estate plan. Colleagues in the Operational Assets Team are currently collating the 2020 running cost data, and officers intend to refer to this data within the school estate plan, when it becomes available.
- 3.9 A further key source of information required to produce an accurate school estate plan is the school roll forecast. This document provides projected pupil roll figures for every school in the estate, covering the next eight years, and is

based on a range of source data, including current school census figures, planned housing development, birth rates and pre-school population, and migration data. The current forecast is based on data which was collated in 2018. This means that we can currently only predict pupil numbers in our schools up until 2026, and these predictions do not benefit from updates to any new source data which was available after 2018.

- 3.10 In order to provide an update to the forecast, there is a requirement to enter into a new data sharing agreement with NHS Grampian, so that it can provide the Council with the data it holds on the numbers of pre-school aged children living in each school catchment area, whilst continuing to comply with GDPR requirements. This data is required for the school roll forecast, to enable the accurate prediction of pupil numbers likely to be entering the P1 year group in each of our primary schools over the first four years of the forecast, and in turn the impact that these year groups will have on pupil numbers as they progress through primary and secondary school in future years.
- 3.11 Officers have been discussing this with NHS Grampian colleagues, and anticipate that a new data sharing agreement will be in place within the next two months. This will then allow colleagues in Data and Insights to compile an updated school roll forecast, which will be used to inform the final recommendations in the school estate plan.
- 3.12 At the other end of the school population, it is important to accurately predict within the school roll forecast the numbers of pupils reaching the end of their S4 year, who will choose to stay on at school for S5 and S6. This is done by monitoring trends in staying-on rates from recent years.
- 3.13 However, head teachers are anticipating that from August 2021 there may be a significant increase in the number of S4 pupils in the city choosing to stay on to S5, due to the pandemic and the impact this is likely to have had on the economy and the local job market. This is anecdotal at present, and more analysis will need to be done to assess the likely impact of this on secondary school roll forecasts. It will be important for the findings from this work to feed into the overall school estate plan, in terms of the amount of space likely to be required in secondary schools in the short to medium term, to accommodate senior pupils.
- 3.14 More generally there are signs that the city is seeing significant change in migration patterns, potentially as a result of the pandemic and also Brexit, which are likely to have created economic uncertainty. The current 2018-based school roll forecast indicates an overall increase in school rolls, whilst other measures indicate that there is a more general trend towards a potential reduction in population across the city, and also a more elderly population.
- 3.15 The timeline for finalising the school estate plan outlined in this report will provide an opportunity for officers to further analyse the impact of the events of the past year in more detail, to ensure that any likely changes to future pupils numbers as a result of these events are fully taken into account, when making final recommendations for improvements to the school estate.

Related Workstreams

- 3.16 Two further workstreams which are currently under way are expected to impact on the recommendations within the school estate plan, and officers consider that it would also be prudent to await the outcomes from these before finalising the school estate plan.
- 3.17 First, at its meeting of 21 November 2019, the Strategic Commissioning Committee approved the commissioning of an Estates and Asset Strategy, to incorporate the School Estate Strategy (subsequently referred to as the School Estate Plan). The estates and asset strategy will set out the high-level principles and objectives for managing and developing the Council's corporate estate, including school buildings. It is intended that the school estate plan will be developed as a separate document, but will require to be aligned to the estates and asset strategy, to ensure that it can deliver on the high-level objectives set out in the overarching strategy document.
- 3.18 Due to the requirement to re-prioritise resources over the past year to support the response to the pandemic, development of the estates and asset strategy has been delayed. It is anticipated that this will be finalised and presented for committee approval by September 2021. It would therefore be necessary to wait until the estates and asset strategy has been approved, before finalising the school estate plan, to ensure that the plan is fully aligned to the strategy document.
- 3.19 In addition, at its budget meeting of 3 March 2020, Council instructed officers to take forward proposals for a community campus model for future school provision. This work is currently ongoing, and a strategic outline case outlining how the model will be developed, was approved by the Capital Programme Board on 25 November 2020.
- 3.20 It is anticipated that an outline business case containing more detail on how a community campus model might be incorporated into the school estate in the future, will be presented for committee approval in November 2021. The outcomes of this work will require to be reflected in the final school estate plan, and therefore it will not be possible to finalise the school estate plan until the work on the community campus model has been completed.
- 3.21 Following completion of the above workstreams and upon receipt of the updated datasets, officers will be required to review and update all aspects of the work on the school estate plan which has been completed to date, and then compile final draft recommendations for elected members on actions required to be taken to improve the school estate, to be included in the final school estate plan.

Community Engagement and Statutory Consultation

- 3.22 Depending on the actions required to be taken, it is likely that an extensive programme of community engagement and formal consultation will be required, before any final decisions on significant changes to the school estate can be

made, to comply with the statutory requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

- 3.23 It is officers' intention to include within the School Estate Plan a detailed procedure and programme for any community engagement and public consultation which may be required, for elected member approval. A draft procedure will be developed in conjunction with Early Intervention & Community Empowerment colleagues, to ensure that any community engagement is as effective as possible in gathering the views of stakeholders, and to help inform final decisions on changes to be taken in the future. The extent of the community engagement and public consultation which will be required will only become clear once the final draft recommendations are known.
- 3.24 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires local authorities to hold a public meeting when carrying out statutory consultations on relevant proposals for making changes to the school estate. This requirement has not changed during the pandemic, and local authorities therefore need to consider whether any planned consultations are necessary and justified during this time, or if they could be delayed, to minimise the risk of the spread of infection associated with holding a public meeting. Had it been possible to deliver a final school estate plan in 2020/21, it is likely that any statutory consultation required prior to making final decisions on changes to the school estate, would not have been possible until health concerns relating to public gatherings had eased.

Timeline and Action Plan

- 3.25 Taking the above factors into consideration, the following action plan has been developed, to summarise the actions which require to be taken, and the associated timescales, before a fully completed and accurate school estate plan can be presented to elected members for approval:

<u>Actions</u>	<u>Resource</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
Obtain updated school running cost data based on 2020/21 figures	Operational Assets Team	March / April 2021
Calculate updated school roll forecasts based on 2020 data, following conclusion of data sharing agreement with NHS Grampian	Data & Insights Team	May / June 2021
Identify carbon use data and improvement criteria	Operational Assets Team / Energy Team	March – August 2021
Review all draft recommendations and priorities for the school estate, based on updated roll forecast and cost data	School Estate Team / Children's Services	July / August 2021
Finalise and seek approval for the Estates and Asset Strategy, which the school estate plan will be aligned to	Operational Assets Team	September 2021
Consider outcomes of the outline business case on development of a community campus model, and the	School Estate Team	November / December 2021

implications this has on the school estate plan		
Finalise recommendations and priorities for the school estate plan, including indicative timeline for community engagement and public consultation	School Estate Team	January - March 2022
Finalise draft school estate plan and submit for approval in line with committee reporting timescales	School Estate Team	April 2022
Final school estate plan presented to Education Operational Delivery Committee for approval	School Estate Team	Summer 2022

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 adequate and efficient provision of school education for their area.
- 5.2 In addition, 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 identified priorities for developing the school estate outlined in the school estate plan will be in fulfilment of 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 the recommendations arising from the school estate plan.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Failure to finalise the school estate plan, leading to the Council being unable to fulfil the Policy Statement priority to develop a school estate strategy	M	The report sets out the process and timeline required to deliver the school estate plan
Compliance	<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>M</p> <p>M</p>	<p>The School Estate Plan will set out priorities for the school estate and proposals for continually monitoring and updating plans to ensure adequate and effective provision is maintained</p> <p>Any proposed changes to schools arising from the School Estate Plan will incorporate plans for statutory consultation</p>
Operational	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 Plan will emphasise a renewed approach which places community engagement and consultation at the centre
Financial	None	N/A	N/A
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 Plan will emphasise a renewed approach which places community engagement and consultation at the centre
Environment / Climate	None	N/A	N/A

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The proposals within this report support the delivery of Policy Statement (People – 1): Completion of a school estate review and development of an estate strategy for the next 5-10 years. The report sets out the process and timeline for completing the school estate plan.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 3 to 7 in the LOIP. The report sets out the process and timeline for completing the school estate plan, which will help to deliver an efficient and effective school estate capable of supporting high quality learning and teaching, which in turn will impact positively on all aspects of children’s experiences in school.
Regional and City Strategies	The proposals within this report support the Local Development Plan. The final school estate plan will ensure that appropriate school capacity is in place to support new housing sites identified within the Local Development Plan.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The report sets out the process and timeline for completing the school estate plan, which will fulfil the duties placed on the Council to ensure that there is adequate and efficient provision of education, by the Education (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required – the recommendations within this report are not expected to impact negatively on any groups with protected characteristics.

Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
--	--------------

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Strategic Commissioning Committee, 21 November 2019: *Strategy Framework*
- Council Budget Meeting, 3 March 2020: *Printed Decisions* (Item xxviii – campus model)
- Education Operational Delivery Committee, 20 January 2021: *Printed Decisions* (Item 4 (ii) – school estate plan)

10. APPENDICES

None

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Andrew Jones
Title	Service Manager
Email Address	ajones@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel	07920 295364