

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	12 September 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	School Estate Plan Annual Update 2023
REPORT NUMBER	RES/23/282
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte / Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the 2023 annual update to the School Estate Plan, providing updates on progress with implementation of the Plan, and highlighting new priorities which have been identified since the School Estate Plan was first approved in September 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the updates to the School Estate Plan which are provided at Appendix 1 of this report;
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue to implement the School Estate Plan in accordance with the updated timeline, presented at Appendix 1 of this report;
- 2.3 Notes that the review of sports facilities at Harlaw Road and Rubislaw sports fields will now be incorporated within the feasibility study for improving the suitability of facilities at Harlaw Academy (Recommendation H1);
- 2.4 Instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out a public consultation on a proposal to alter the school catchment areas for Greenbrae School and Scotstown School, so that they align with the city boundary and no longer extend beyond it into Aberdeenshire. (Recommendation O4/BD2)

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 At its meeting on 8 September 2022, the former Education Operational Delivery Committee approved the Council's School Estate Plan, and instructed officers to "*present an annual update to the School Estate Plan to the Education and Children's Services Committee, commencing from September 2023, to report on progress with the agreed actions and to update these as appropriate*". This report seeks to fulfil that instruction.

- 3.2 The annual update to the School Estate Plan, included at Appendix 1 of this report, provides information on progress to date with the actions and instructions which were agreed within the School Estate Plan, and highlights further priorities for action which have been identified during the course of the last year.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the Committee approves the new recommendations which are listed in Section 2 above, and which are reflected in the update report at Appendix 1, and that it instructs officers to continue to implement the School Estate Plan, in line with the updated timeline for implementation, which is provided in Section 3 of the update report.
- 3.4 Recommendation O4/BD2 above relates to proposed minor changes to the catchment areas for Greenbrae School and Scotstown School, which currently extend beyond the city boundary and into a small area of Aberdeenshire. Earlier this year Aberdeenshire Council approved a change to its catchment area for Balmedie School, which now extends to the Aberdeen City / Aberdeenshire boundary, and includes these small areas of land, which currently are also part of the Greenbrae or Scotstown catchment areas. This means there are effectively 'dual zones' in place, and any children living within these areas of Aberdeenshire would have an entitlement to attend Balmedie School as well as Greenbrae School or Scotstown School.
- 3.5 To remove any ambiguity and provide clarity on the zoning arrangements for this area, it is recommended that a public consultation is undertaken on a proposal to alter the school catchment areas for Greenbrae School and Scotstown School, so that they no longer extend beyond the city boundary, removing the dual zone issue and confirming that the area of Aberdeenshire is zoned only to Balmedie School.
- 3.6 At its meeting of 4 July 2023, the Education and Children's Services Committee approved a recommendation for officers to carry out a statutory public consultation on the proposal to establish a new primary school at Bucksburn / Newhills, and on proposed changes to the catchment area for Brimmond School. At the same meeting, the Committee also instructed the Chief Officer, Corporate Landlord to provide Members with a firm date for the statutory consultation, and to report the date to the next Committee meeting.
- 3.7 As detailed in Section 3 of the annual update report at Appendix 1 below, it is proposed that the statutory consultation for the proposed new school at Bucksburn / Newhills is carried out from **5 February 2024 to 22 March 2024**. The outcomes of the consultation would then be reported to the Committee for its consideration at its meeting in May 2024.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The School Estate Plan will continue to be implemented using funding which has been allocated for this purpose within the General Fund capital programme. There are no further direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 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 identified priorities for developing the school estate outlined in the updated School Estate Plan are 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 has been given in the recommendations arising from the School Estate Plan.
- 5.5 The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 requires local authorities to prepare and keep under review an accessibility strategy for increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum; improving the physical environment of schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability are able to take advantage of education and improving communication with pupils with a disability. In taking account of the Accessibility Plan, the School Estate Plan assists the Education Authority to realise these statutory aims.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The School Estate Plan outlines the approaches which will be taken to bring about positive impacts on the environment in the future, through reducing carbon emissions from the existing school estate and from future new build schools to contribute to the Council's net zero carbon ambitions, and through ensuring improved resource efficiency by rationalising the school estate where appropriate.
- 6.2 All new build and refurbishment projects are compliant with the Council's Building Performance policy, and through the location and design of new buildings we will seek to promote active and sustainable travel to school.

6.3 Designing new schools for the future presents opportunities to make positive impacts on other aspects of the natural environment, including, for example, making space for nature through sustainable approaches to landscaping, avoiding over-use of synthetic materials in school grounds, and providing space for food growing initiatives. Officers will continue to work closely with colleagues in Environmental Planning when designing new and refurbished outdoor spaces, to ensure consideration is given to these important factors.

6.4 However it is also recognised that carrying out physical changes to the school estate, such as removing surplus capacity or constructing new buildings, could potentially result in a negative impact on the environment, for example through disturbance to habitats and roosting animals, or affecting existing open spaces. Any such activity will be planned carefully to minimise any such negative impacts wherever possible.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			
Compliance	(1) Failure to plan effectively for the school estate, leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate and efficient provision (2) Failure to consult formally with stakeholders on changes to schools would be in breach of legislation	1) The School Estate Plan sets out updated priorities for the school estate and proposals for continually monitoring and updating plans to ensure adequate and efficient provision is maintained (2) Any proposed changes to schools arising from the School Estate Plan will incorporate full statutory consultation to ensure compliance with legislation	L	Yes
Operational	Failure to engage and consult with	The School Estate Plan emphasises an approach which	L	Yes

	communities on the future of the school estate which serves them, could lead to a breakdown in relationships with community members. Some proposals about the future of the school estate may not be popular with some stakeholders	places community engagement and consultation at the centre		
Financial	No significant risks identified			
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. Some proposals about the future of the school estate may not be popular with some stakeholders	The School Estate Plan emphasises an approach which places community engagement and consultation at the centre	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Development of the school estate and the addition of new school capacity may lead to increased carbon emissions	Climate risks and the need for the school estate to contribute to the Council's net zero carbon emissions targets will be embedded into planning and decision making.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>The updated School Estate Plan supports the delivery of the following policy statements:</p> <p><u>A City of Opportunity</u></p> <p>Policy Statement 2 - Review and invest in our school estate, ensuring all of Aberdeen's schools are fit for the educational needs and the challenges of the 21st century. The report seeks Committee's approval of the School Estate Plan.</p> <p><u>A Prosperous City</u></p> <p>Policy Statement 8 - Seek to buy goods, services and food locally whenever possible, subject to complying with the law and public tendering requirements. Opportunities to do this will be considered for all Capital Projects.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The updated School Estate Plan supports the delivery of Stretch Outcome 8 in the LOIP – Child friendly city where all decisions which impact children and young people will be informed by them by 2026. The School Estate Plan sets out how all stakeholders including children and young people will be consulted on proposals to make changes to the school estate.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The updated School Estate Plan supports the delivery of Stretch Outcome 13 in the LOIP – Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate. The School Estate Plan sets out the approach which will be taken to reduce carbon emissions from the school estate.
Regional and City Strategies	The School Estate Plan will support the delivery of the Council's Property and Estates Strategy (currently in draft).

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment (Stage 1) relating to the School Estate Plan has been reviewed and no changes required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	No other assessments required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Education Operational Delivery Committee, 8 September 2022: [Agenda Item 14: School Estate Plan 2022](#).

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1: School Estate Plan Annual Update September 2023

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