

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services
<b>DATE</b>	20 February 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	School Estate Plan Revised Timeline
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	RES/24/055
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Steve Whyte
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Stephen Booth
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Andrew Jones
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents a draft revised timeline for continuing to implement the recommended actions from the School Estate Plan.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to implement the School Estate Plan in accordance with the revised timeline presented at Appendix 1 of this report.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 At its meeting of 8 September 2022, the former Education Operational Delivery Committee approved the Council's School Estate Plan, and subsequently on 8 November 2022, the Education and Children's Services Committee considered and approved a detailed timeline for the implementation of the individual actions contained within the School Estate Plan.
- 3.2 At its meeting of 12 September 2023, the Committee was presented with the first annual update to the School Estate Plan, which provided details of progress to date with each of the projects and priorities within the Plan, along with an indication of the timescales for carrying out the remaining projects.
- 3.3 As a consequence of concerns raised nationally regarding the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in some school buildings, and the requirement for the School Estate Team to prioritise their response to these concerns from late August 2023 onwards, a number of projects within the School Estate Plan programmed to be under way in Autumn/Winter 2023 were

delayed. This has subsequently impacted on the planned timelines for projects which are scheduled to be undertaken in 2024.

- 3.4 Consequently, it has become necessary to reprioritise projects and revise the overall timeline for the School Estate Plan, to ensure that it can be delivered successfully within the limits of the available staffing and capital resources.
- 3.5 The revised and reprioritised timeline is included at Appendix 1. The significant changes to the programme and timeline are summarised below.

#### Bucksburn / Newhills additional primary provision

- 3.6 At its meeting of 4 July 2023, the Committee approved a recommendation to carry out a statutory public consultation on the establishment of a new primary school and related changes to the existing catchment area for Brimmond School, to serve planned new housing within the Newhills Development Area. At that time officers anticipated that the consultation would be launched in Winter 2023/24.
- 3.7 Having reviewed the forecast pupil numbers likely to be generated by the Newhills development, and the available capacity at Brimmond School, the catchment area for which currently includes the new housing, officers have determined that there is no immediate requirement to start work on the construction of the proposed new school, and therefore that it would not be appropriate to launch a public consultation on such proposals at this point in time.
- 3.8 To relieve pressure on staff resources, it is proposed that the launch of the consultation is delayed, and this has been reflected within the revised programme at Appendix A. Officers will continue to regularly monitor progress with the construction of housing within the new development, and future updates to pupil roll forecasts, to determine when would be the optimum time to commence work on establishing a new school, and therefore when it would be appropriate to launch a public consultation on this proposal. An update on this will be provided within the annual update to the School Estate Plan, in September 2024.

#### Northfield ASG Primary Schools Excess Capacity

- 3.9 As noted within a separate report to the Committee for its meeting on 20 February 2024, detailing the outcomes of a feasibility study on reducing the number of primary schools within the Northfield Associated Schools Group (ASG), officers have recommended that further work is undertaken to identify potential future options for improving and consolidating primary school provision in the Northfield ASG, alongside the proposed work to consider the long term future of Northfield Academy.
- 3.10 The date for reporting back to the Committee with an outline business case and a preferred option has therefore been moved within the revised programme at Appendix A, to allow time for this further work to be carried out. An update on

this work would be reported to the Committee as part of the annual update to the School Estate Plan in September 2024.

### Victorian School Building Improvements

- 3.11 Preparatory work for the feasibility study to look at options for improving the city's Victorian school buildings was undertaken in 2023. The feasibility study itself was launched in January 2024, and is currently ongoing. Emerging findings from the work undertaken to date indicate that the costs involved in carrying out the required improvements at each of these buildings will be significant.
- 3.12 Due to the number of buildings included in this project and the extent of the works likely to be required at each, more time will be required to carry out the feasibility study, to fully assess the requirements in each building, to identify options for bringing about the necessary improvements, and for designing and costing potential solutions to be presented in an outline business case.
- 3.13 Meanwhile, feasibility studies have been carried out to identify improvements for Harlaw Academy and Ferryhill School, which are also Victorian buildings but which are being treated as separate projects, because they are considered to be the highest priority for requiring improvement to their condition and suitability. Outline business cases for these two projects are being drafted, and due to the extent of the work required to bring about the necessary improvements to these buildings, significant capital funding and also staffing resource will be required to deliver the preferred options which have been identified within the business cases.
- 3.14 Given the clear need to find appropriate solutions for improving all of our Victorian school buildings, whilst also recognising that there are currently limited resources for managing these (both in terms of budget and also staffing), the timeline for delivering these projects has been adjusted. This will allow the required additional time this year for the feasibility study to fully investigate each building in the Victorian Schools project, and to allow a more detailed and costed outline business case to be presented for committee consideration, with a view to the required improvement works commencing from 2025 onwards.
- 3.15 The adjusted programme, as shown within Appendix A, will also allow priority to be given this year to progressing the outline business cases for Harlaw Academy and Ferryhill School, which are in the process of being drafted. This will help to ensure that if the business cases are approved, works to improve these buildings can be started as soon as possible.

### Loirston Loch Additional Primary Provision

- 3.16 The approved School Estate Plan includes an instruction to officers to carry out a feasibility study to consider options for creating additional primary school capacity to serve the planned Loirston Loch development. It was originally intended for this feasibility study to be undertaken from Autumn/Winter 2023/24.

- 3.17 There has been limited progress with the Loirston Loch development to date, which means any required additional school capacity is not likely to be required for some time. To help manage staff resources, it is therefore proposed that this feasibility study is delayed, and this has been reflected in the revised programme at Appendix A. Officers will continue to monitor progress with the proposed new development, and future updates to pupil roll forecasts, to determine when would be the optimum time to commence the feasibility study. An update on this will be provided within future annual updates to the School Estate Plan.

#### St Peter's RC School Refurbishment

- 3.18 At its meeting on 13 December 2023, Council instructed officers to take forwards the refurbishment of Old Aberdeen House and an extension to provide refurbished accommodation for St Peter's School. This project has been added to the timeline at Appendix A to allow for progress with the project to be reported and monitored alongside the rest of the School Estate Plan.

#### Summary

- 3.19 For the reasons outlined above, the programme for the implementation of the School Estate Plan has been revised and reprofiled. It is recommended that the Committee instructs officers to implement the School Estate Plan in accordance with the revised timeline presented at Appendix 1 of this report.

### **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 revised implementation 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, and in the activities and timescales set out within the revised implementation plan.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from the recommendation within this report.

## 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?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Failure to plan effectively for the school estate, leading to schools becoming over / under subscribed	The School Estate Plan and revised implementation plan set out the priorities for the school estate and proposals for continually monitoring and updating plans, to ensure adequate and efficient provision is maintained	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	(1) Failure to plan effectively for the school estate, leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate	1) The School Estate Plan and revised implementation plan set out the priorities for the school estate and proposals for continually monitoring and	L	Yes

	<p>and efficient provision</p> <p>(2) Failure to consult formally with stakeholders on changes to schools would be in breach of legislation</p>	<p>updating plans, to ensure adequate and efficient provision is maintained</p> <p>(2) Any proposed changes to schools arising from the School Estate Plan will incorporate full statutory consultation to ensure compliance with legislation</p>		
<b>Operational</b>	<p>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. Some proposals about the future of the school estate may not be popular with some stakeholders</p>	<p>The School Estate Plan emphasises an approach which places community engagement and consultation at the centre</p>	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	<p>High construction inflation likely to lead to increased costs for construction projects</p>	<p>Outline business cases and full business cases will be regularly reviewed, to ensure estimated costs are up to date, and any increases above approved budgets will be reported through the Council's established governance processes.</p>	M	Yes

<b>Reputational</b>	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
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	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><b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</b></u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	<p>This report 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 revised implementation timeline for the School Estate Plan, which will help bring about improvements to the school estate.</p> <p><u>A Prosperous City</u></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.
<b><u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</a></u></b>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support 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 and revised implementation plan set out how all stakeholders including children and young people will be consulted on proposals to make changes to the school estate.
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	The School Estate Plan and revised implementation plan will support the delivery of the Council's Property and Estates Strategy (currently in draft).

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

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

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Education Operational Delivery Committee, 8 September 2022: Agenda Item 14: [School Estate Plan 2022](#).
- 10.2 Education and Children's Services Committee, 8 November 2022: Agenda Item 10: [School Estate Plan Implementation Plan](#).

- 10.3 Education and Children's Services Committee, 4 July 2023: Agenda Item 5: [Newhills Additional Primary School Provision](#).
- 10.4 Education and Children's Services Committee, 12 September 2023: Agenda Item 16: [School Estate Plan Annual Update 2023](#).

## 11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 : School Estate Plan Revised Implementation Plan

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Andrew Jones
<b>Title</b>	Service Manager
<b>Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:ajones@aberdeencity.gov.uk">ajones@aberdeencity.gov.uk</a>
<b>Tel</b>	07920 295364