

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance and Resources
DATE	06 August 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Ferryhill School and Harlaw Academy Suitability Improvements
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/25/173
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	Alan McKay
REPORT AUTHOR	Colin Kemp
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update on progress and confirm future reporting arrangements for Ferryhill School and Harlaw Academy Suitability projects identified within the approved Capital Programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee :-

- 2.1 Note the advance and enabling development works undertaken to date to reduce risk to the main construction works and mitigate educational disruption.
- 2.2 Note that the works carried out to date remain within the Capital Plan budget envelope and that work continues towards collating the main costs that will allow completion of the full business case.
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer – Capital to continue to progress all necessary procurements, approvals, permissions, licenses, agreements and consents required to develop and implement the projects within the Capital Programme budget, reporting progress through the regular capital programme monitoring reports to this committee and to circulate for information the full business Cases for each project to committee members once completed.

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 take forwards a detailed action plan to develop and improve the school estate. This included an instruction for officers to carry out feasibility studies, that included Ferryhill School and Harlaw Academy, to identify options for improving the suitability of schools.
- 3.2 Following the completion of those feasibility studies, outline business cases were prepared for the 8 May 2024 Finance and Resources Committee. These set out the findings and provided an analysis of the options available for improving the suitability of the school buildings. The Committee resolved to approve the outline business cases and approved the use of resources to take forward the proposals.
- 3.3 Works have progressed following the committee decision on 8th May 2024 with progress reports provided as part of the Capital Programme Delivery : Projects Updates to the 12th September 2024 and 26th March 2025 Finance and Resources Committees, and service updates were also issued before the Finance and Resources Committee on 7 May 2025
- 3.4 The Ferryhill School Suitability Improvements aim to address critical suitability issues that have reached a point of necessitating immediate action. It was recognised that the existing facilities are no longer suitable for the growing number of pupils using them and are negatively impacting the school's operations, this includes:-
- A new dining facility to accommodate the growing roll, a new nursery to improvement direct access to external play areas to promote child development, external improvements to increase the usable outdoor space, improving supervision and improving safety, new PE facilities to replace the existing spaces that do not conform to current guidance standards, improving the existing teaching block to improve accessibility and its suitability as an education space.
 - Based on the latest Condition and Suitability reports changing the current suitability rating of grade D (not fit for purpose) to grade A (fully fit for purpose) when the work is completed. The grading is based on the guidance issued by the Scottish Government.
 - As noted in the Service Update issued in May 2025, after reviewing the feedback received during project development, in particular concerns around the decant of the school to Walker Road and the disruption this could cause to the operation of the school, pupils and parents, the proposals where updated and a review of the delivery and procurement strategy was undertaken

- The review identified a compliant procurement route that could minimise disruption, and address concerns about the length of time children would be relocated to Walker Road. To do so a decision was made to bring forward the design to start of construction of the standalone nursery from May 2025 to January 2025 with a proposed completion date of summer 25.
- On completion of a market testing exercise, and subsequent analysis of the cost, a Main Contractor was appointed to carry out the construction of the Nursery. Works commenced late January with an anticipated completion date summer 2025. This will allow nursery provision to remain onsite, without the need to decant the children to Walker Road School, for the duration of the works. This also removed the need for school transport with the associated savings.
- The design process for the refurbishment and extension of the existing Ferryhill School has now been completed, tender documents prepared and the procurement is underway. The start date is expected to be summer 2025 with an expected completion date of summer 2026. In order to achieve the completion date the Full Business Case and contract award will need to be agreed and issued in August 2025.

3.5 The Harlaw Academy Suitability Improvements aim to address critical suitability issues that have reached a point of requiring immediate action, This includes:-

- A new dining facility, additional PE space onsite, a building with improved flexibility and better use of space across the whole site.
- Based on the latest Condition and Suitability reports changing the current suitability rating of grade D (not fit for purpose) to grade B (satisfactory) on completion of the works. The grading is based on the guidance issued by the Scottish Government.
- In order to de-risk, and to manage the project being carried out while the school remains operational, the works have been broken down into 3 work packages, enabling works, internal refurbishment and the new extension. Each package is on a separate timeline to allow the works to start in summer 2025. However, some elements cannot start until the extension has been completed and handed over to maintain continuity of services, such as the kitchen and dining room arrangements.
- The enabling works have been completed and internal works are planned for summer 2025.
- The design process for the extension of the existing school has been completed, tender documents prepared and the procurement is underway. The target construction start date is summer 2025 with an expected completion date of summer 2026. In order to achieve the

completion date the Full Business Case and contract award will need to be agreed and issued in August 2025.

3.6 The Harlaw Pavilion project forms part of the overall Harlaw Academy Suitability Improvements programme that aims to address critical suitability issues that have reached a point of necessitating immediate action. The project includes:-

- Improving the delivery of the PE curriculum, as this is posing challenges as the school timetable is based around Physical Education (PE) as most of it is delivered off site. This means that double periods for offsite PE is a necessity to allow travel time to and from the pitch at Groats Road, Hazlehead.
- The demolition of the existing pavilion to make way for the new facility is due to start in July 2025
- Creation of a new Harlaw Pavillion that will allow the Harlaw Road Playing Fields to be used as the main outdoor PE provision for Harlaw Academy.

3.7 The design process for the new pavilion has been completed, tender documents prepared and the procurement is underway. The target start date is summer 2025 and an expected completion date of spring 2026. The completion date is linked with the planned replacement building for Hazlehead Academy - Harlaw PE provision requires to be relocated to Harlaw Road to allow Hazlehead PE provision to temporarily move to Groats Road prior to construction of the new school building on playing fields adjacent to Hazlehead Academy. In order to achieve the completion date the Full Business Case and contract award will need to be agreed and issued in August 2025.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Individual project expenditure and budgets are routinely reviewed by project managers and against the approved Capital Programme by the Chief Officer – Capital.
- 4.2 As the projects develop outturn cost checks will be carried out, if necessary value engineering exercises are implemented to manage the individual project budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failure to manage Council finance and resources could lead to failure to achieve strategic objectives	Regular financial reporting and monitoring activities, to incorporate financial resilience to address financial pressures arising in year is maintained and monitored.	M	Yes
Compliance	Failure to be able to comply with project requirements	Increase site visits and monitoring of the construction works. If required, review alternative options as soon as possible.	L	Yes
Operational	Disruption to the schools and impact on the school curriculum	Engage with the schools and plan the works around the school needs and requirements. Decant school to another setting if appropriate.	M	Yes
Financial	Escalation of costs	Early contractor engagement and management of risk during the design and delivery phase. Delivering on programme to minimise inflationary costs	M	Yes

		impacting on the budget.		
Reputational	Programmes/projects being delayed or stopped	As above	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	Failure to consider sustainable options due to costs.	Ensure all contracts consider environmental considerations, and early market engagement is conducted to seek market intelligence.	M	Yes

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<u>A City of Opportunity</u> 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.
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Prosperous People: The project will support Stretch Outcome 8 in the LOIP - <i>Child friendly city where all decisions which impact children and young people will be informed by them by 2026</i> . Ongoing stakeholder engagement will help ensure that the views of children and young people will be taken into account.
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 proposed improvements to the school site will assist in reducing carbon emissions from the school estate
Regional and City Strategies	This project forms part of the School Estate Plan which will support the delivery of the Council's Property and Estates Strategy and the Net Zero Routemap for Aberdeen City.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Integrated Impact Assessments for each of the projects have been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not Required
Other	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Council Budget Meeting -05 March 2025 - Report No CORS/25/048
- 10.2 Council Budget Meeting -06 March 2024 - Report No RES/24/061
- 10.3 Finance & Resources Committee – 8 May 2024 Report No F&C/24/134
- 10.4 Finance & Resources Committee – 7 May 2025 – Service Updates

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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