
SCHOOL ESTATE IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

Report by Depute Chief Executive People

EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION)

20 January 2015

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report seeks to update the Executive on the proposed development of a School Estate Strategy; and, agree the principles to be applied to future investment in buildings used to deliver services to Children & Young People.**
- 1.2 Scottish Borders Council invests around 31% of its Capital and around 47% of its Revenue expenditure in the development and maintenance of school buildings and other buildings used to deliver services to Children & Young People. Delivering significant projects like Kelso High School this rises to around 46% of its capital expenditure. As demand for these services increases and pressures on available budgets become more pronounced, Scottish Borders Council must have a robust long-term strategy and ongoing processes to carefully and consistently consider all future investment in order to maximise the individual and educational outcomes for all children and young people.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that Executive:-**
- (a) **Agrees that Scottish Borders Council adopts a long-term strategic approach to the development and design of the School Estate.**
 - (b) **Agrees that all options be considered in the development of the School Estate Strategy.**
 - (c) **Agrees that the primary principles of 'maximising educational opportunities' and 'improving individual outcomes' be considered in conjunction with the other principles of 'sustainability', 'affordability' and 'Future proof' throughout the School Estate Strategy.**

3 THE SCOTTISH BORDERS SCHOOL ESTATE

- 3.1 Scottish Borders Council has the following buildings related to the delivery of services to children & young people:
- 63 primary schools
 - 9 secondary schools – 3 of these are PPP schools
 - 45 Early Learning Facilities (Nurseries) within schools & 4 Early Learning Centres under development also within schools.
 - 5 Locality offices and additional bases in other SBC buildings delivering Children & Young People Support Services.
 - 2 Specialist Education facilities (Wilton and Howdenburn) plus additional support provision as part of mainstream school sites
- 3.2 It is a requirement of the Scottish Government that Councils maintain and update their School Estate Strategy and associated Management Plan (SEMP). These should set out realistic and prioritised options for improvement. These plans will support the co-ordination of information across the school estate at a national level and are expected to be the basis on which future investment decisions will be made. Government investment is currently targeted towards improving the overall condition of the school estate nationally and Councils are expected to manage investment that supports housing development.
- 3.3 Scottish Borders must ensure that all buildings are fit for purpose, e.g. to provide 21st century education and support. Much of the estate was designed for the provision of education and services in a different environment than will be required in the future. Mechanisms for the delivery of the learning and development experience have changed and will continue to change with advances in technology; and Scottish Borders Council has an obligation to facilitate the best opportunities for its children & young people.
- 3.4 In order to maximise investment in every child/young person (estimated numbers 14,821 at Aug 2014), Scottish Borders Council must ensure that all spend on estates is in line with a wider investment plan as part of a long-term strategy. This will require the establishment of key principles, which are proposed as:
- (a) Where possible, all Children & Young People Services will be delivered within a School-based environment.
 - (b) All future development of the school estate will be considered in a long-term Scottish Borders-wide framework rather than ad-hoc changes at a local level.
 - (c) All future development work will need to deliver:
 - **increased educational opportunities**
 - **improved outcomes for young people**
 - **sustainability**
 - **affordability**
 - and be **future proofed as far as possible**Use of the school estate will be in line with a wider multi-functional approach where buildings are seen as public and community assets.

(d) All options will be considered in order to maximise the educational and development opportunities for Children & Young People.

3.5 It is recognised that a balance will need to be struck between local priorities within schools/localities and the wider investment plans/criteria that will form part of a Scottish Borders School Estate Strategy. However, it is envisaged the development of a School Estate Strategy will provide clarity for all stakeholders over likely investment decisions in the short term (1-3 years), medium term (3-5 years) and longer term (5 years and beyond). This will require regular review to ensure the strategy is not outdated by changes to technology, society and policy. There will be regular discussions and views sought regarding the School Estate Strategy development and ongoing review with:

- Children and Young People
- Education Executive or other designated committee of the Council
- Parent Representatives
- Head teacher and staff groups
- SBC Officer Working Group
- Cross- Departmental Project team(s)

4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

This strategy will align with and influence the Council's Capital Investment Plan and long-term Revenue Financial Planning. The strategy will be based on detailed financial plans and modelling to inform future decisions.

4.2 Risk and Mitigations

It is crucial that Scottish Borders Council seeks to maximise the quality, relevance and use of the School Estate. Without a strategic approach to this there is significant scope for poorer educational and individual outcomes for children & young people in the Scottish Borders; and, unsustainable buildings in the future.

4.3 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of a School Estate Strategy Development to mitigate against any adverse equality implications.

4.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no significant impacts on the Economy, Community or Environment arising from the proposals contained in this report. However, the School Estate Strategy will seek to ensure sustainability, which will be considered as part of an Options Appraisal.

4.5 Carbon Management

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report. However, the School Estate Strategy will seek to promote environmental responsibility and effective carbon management as part of an Options Appraisal.

4.6 Rural Proofing

The development of a School Estate Strategy will seek to ensure that services are enhanced within the context of rurality. This will be a key component of any discussions which alter the school estate.

4.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Service Director Regulatory Services as Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR, and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Jeanette McDiarmid
Depute Chief Executive People

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jason McDonald	Senior Manager Business Strategy & Resources

Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: None

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Contact us at Jason McDonald, SBC, Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA, 01835 824000