
UPDATE ON WORKSTREAMS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL ESTATE REVIEW

Report by Interim Service Director, Children & Young People

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

30 April 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on workstreams within the context of the School Estate Review.**
- 1.2 Commitment was given to provide regular updates on the School Estate to this Committee. There are a number of different workstreams across this work and while individual reports continue to be presented where appropriate, this report offers a broad overview of key aspects within each area.
- 1.3 The principles and approach of "Fit for 2024" strongly reflects the principles and opportunities of the School Estate and this report.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that Executive Committee:-**
 - (a) Note the content of the report.**
 - (b) Approves the actions proposed as next steps for consultation in Galashiels and Hawick.**
 - (c) Agrees that the School Estate Management Plan be brought to Committee within six months.**

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Guiding principles for the School Estate Review were agreed in January 2015 and work on this strategy has been ongoing since October 2016, with engagement in all localities across the authority resulting in proposals and changes being implemented, ranging from achieving funding to create the new campus in Jedburgh to the closure of small, unsustainable schools, to improve educational benefit for children and young people and life opportunities for the entire community.

5 EYEMOUTH AND EARLSTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- 5.1 On 16 April 2019 the Executive Committee approved the following recommendations:
- (a) Agree to progress to the next stages in the detail design and costing process for both Eyemouth Primary School and Earlston Primary School;
 - (b) Notes that further updates will be provided to Members as more detailed information and clarity around potential future funding support from Scottish Government becomes available;
 - (c) Notes that Eyemouth while will be treated as a priority, and further considers that if sufficient funding support were to be provided by Scottish Government, that Eyemouth Primary School and Earlston Primary School will be progressed and procured in parallel (subject to any revised profiling of the capital programme); and
 - (d) In accordance with the principle of "Fit for 2024", request that Officers consider all potential options for property asset consolidation within each of the respective school clusters as part of the proposed capital investment.
- 5.2 As a result, there will be consultations held during the coming months with the respective communities to examine both the design and cluster elements of these projects.
- 5.3 **High Schools**
- (a) In November 2018, Scottish Borders Council agreed the proposed indicative sequence and priority for investment in high schools and commitment was given that a further report would be prepared and presented to Members setting out a detailed delivery programme and the financial implications of progressing Galashiels as a first priority. It was noted that the timescale of that report would be dependent upon further community consultation regarding the preferred education model and discussions on funding with Scottish Government and Scottish Futures Trust.
 - (b) Officers met with Scottish Futures Trust in January and productive discussions were held around plans for the estate in Scottish Borders. Due to ongoing discussions with COSLA, it is likely that any announcement of funding and methodologies for the new £1 billion programme for the learning estate will potentially be made in Autumn 2019.

- (c) Officers were encouraged to continue to progress with current investment plans, taking cognisance of community integration and shared services as key principles.
- (d) In Galashiels, a meeting with all Headteachers and Chairs of Parent Councils was held in February. The focus of this meeting was to look at the primary estate and identify where opportunities may exist to consolidate. During this meeting, it was clear that there is agreement that the number of schools in Galashiels is too high and that a plan to rationalise and improve the condition and suitability would be welcome. As a result of discussions, an open event supported by questionnaires will be undertaken to look at some focused proposals. There was a strong view that to encourage engagement in any future proposals, there needs to be some firm suggestions of what the learning estate could look like offered for discussion.
- (e) Proposals for discussion will make suggestions therefore on the potential number of sites or campuses, locations, likely size and scale of future provisions and considerations for rural schools.
- (f) Wider discussions about the "Community Learning Estate" are also ongoing with regard to the potential co-location of partners and other services such as Police Scotland, Borders College or Care Provision alongside the delivery of complimentary Council services (such as the 'What Matters Hubs' or contact centre/library services for example) and some master planning of the preferred site for the campus will be the next step in this process. It has been made clear by Scottish Government that true community facilities, offering innovate service delivery models will be prioritised for funding and investment. A new 'Learning Estate' strategy is to be published shortly by the Scottish Government.
- (g) A similar meeting took place in Hawick with Headteachers and parent representatives. There was a similar view from attendees that there are too many schools, all in poor condition and with varying degrees of occupancy across the primary estate and an opportunity to explore the potential for change was welcomed. It was identified, however, that the critical first step for Hawick was to narrow down the number of locations and to explore the positives and negatives of each site for each of the different interest groups likely to be affected. From a position of greater clarity around sites, a set of possible campus models would then be consulted on. The work to narrow down the sites available will be progressed as a matter of urgency.

5.4 **Mothballed Schools**

- (a) Formal consultation processes are underway on proposals to close the 3 schools which are currently mothballed in Ettrick, Bonchester Bridge (Hobkirk) and Eccles/Leitholm.
- (b) Public meetings have been held in each of the communities and Education Scotland representatives will undertake visits in the near future. A report will be brought to Council for decision in accordance with the legislation.

5.5 **Selkirk Catchment Area**

A separate paper recommending amendments to the catchment around Yarrow Primary is being presented to Education Executive.

5.6 **Early Years Expansion**

- (a) There are a number of projects to extend the provision in schools to accommodate the additional numbers which will result from the expanded offer of 1140 hours for all 3 and 4 year olds plus eligible 2 year olds from August 2020.
- (b) New provisions in St Boswells and St Margaret's in Galashiels opened this session, along with extended provisions in Chirnside and Burgh Primary, Galashiels. Work to refurbish space in Yetholm Primary to create additional provision is nearing completion and the addition of the required sanitary accommodation to increase numbers in Duns is underway.
- (c) Works are planned to start this term in Stirches, Hawick and in the next few months to create a new provision in Swinton and extend the space in Stow. Designs are being finalised for new provisions linked to Priorsford and St Ronan's Primaries and due for completion in Summer 2020.
- (d) Additional space will be required for both Galashiels and Hawick. However, it has been considered sensible to plan for such provisions alongside any plans for the wider school estate in these towns. Through discussion with Scottish Futures Trust, we have confirmed that the period for the capital investment to be spent on this priority is long enough to enable this joined up approach to happen.

5.7 **Jedburgh Campus**

- (a) Work continues to progress at pace on the new campus with partitions and windows being installed. Plans to bring the primary schools together in August are also well advanced.
- (b) A hugely successful Open Doors Day was hosted by BAM Construction, with this project attracting the most interest across the country and being first to "sell out". Visits have been arranged for all pupils and staff to take place before the summer break.
- (c) Over 100 suggestions were submitted by the community for a name and discussions have been held with local Members around creating a shortlist. Once this is ready, votes for the preferred name will be invited.

5.8 **Fit for 2024**

- (a) In line with the principles of "Fit for 2024", it is important that the review of the school estate is ongoing and responsive. All opportunities for potential rationalisation, consolidation and co-location need to be identified and evaluated in the context of a future-proofed Learning estate.
- (b) The statutory duty of best value requires each Local Authority to have a School Estate Management Plan (SEMP). Linking with the

Asset Management Plan, this tool ensures that decisions on investment can be made from an informed baseline. The output of all the work to date is being collated into a new SEMP, which will be presented to Executive for approval.

6 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report. Any financial implications have been highlighted and considered within the individual workstream.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk that not exploring opportunities to achieve best value in the School Estate, there will be continued deterioration and revenue pressures. The SEMP will inform priorities for rationalisation and investment to mitigate this.

5.3 Equalities

- (a) An equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out across the School Estate Review.
- (b) It is anticipated that there are no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no significant impacts on the economy, community or environment arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.5 Carbon Management

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.6 Rural Proofing

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

5.7 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.

6 CONSULTATION

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

Approved by

Stuart Easingwood

Interim Service Director, Children & Young People

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Lesley Munro	Lead Education Officer

Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference:

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