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**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
26 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**SUBJECT: SCHOOL ESTATE STRATEGIC PLAN**

**BY: ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR (EDUCATION AND SOCIAL  
CARE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of the development of a strategic plan for the Councils school estate and to approve the principles and assumptions underlying it.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as Education Authority within the terms of relevant legislation with regard to nursery, primary and secondary education.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee:-**

- (i) scrutinises and notes the contents of the report.**
- (ii) approves the assumptions and principles as detailed in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8. and;**
- (iii) agree that a draft strategy based on the approved assumptions and principles is submitted to a future the meeting of this Committee.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to provide adequate and efficient education in Moray, with sufficient school accommodation. It also has to endeavour to raise standards, improve the quality of education delivered, ensure that education is directed towards the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of pupils to their fullest potential and provide for additional support needs whilst also securing best value and meeting equalities duties. It also has a duty to have regard to pupils views, so far as reasonably

practicable, and educate pupils in accordance with the wishes of parents so far as compatible with the provision of suitable education and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.

- 3.2 The school estate provides the essential infrastructure for the delivery of education in Moray. The majority of the school estate was built and designed for demographics and methods of teaching that are no longer applicable. This produces pressures on capacity issues, teaching and learning resources, building maintenance and new build provision.
- 3.3 The current “Schools for the Future” policy is a valuable tool in assessing education at an ASG level but does not assist with strategic planning on a Moray wide basis which looks at provision at this level. Decisions on future bids for Scottish Government funding for new schools should be based on Moray wide options appraisal. The Schools for the Future policy will be revised at the end of the current cycle.
- 3.4 It is also of note that there is a need to plan for and respond to population changes, in particular predicted population growth in Elgin. It is acknowledged that the current short term approach to the school estate will require to be replaced with a longer term strategy for the future school estate looking across the whole of Moray and work on this is underway with a view to bringing forward a proposal early in 2019.
- 3.5 The lack of a school estate strategy is also impacting the Local Development Plan. Developer obligations of in excess of £30 million are at risk if the Council does not effectively plan for school estate provision. The current review of the Scottish planning system places a strong emphasis upon an infrastructure first approach and the Council has set up an Infrastructure Delivery Group, chaired by the Council’s Development Plans Officer, including Scottish Water, Transportation and NHS Grampian. A forward looking strategy is a key element of an infrastructure first approach, also allowing consideration of shared “hub” facilities with other community planning partners. The strategy is also required to ensure that sites are identified in the right locations for new schools, ensuring that the land is valued at the correct level.
- 3.6 Without a long term strategic view of the school estate in Moray, significant financial decisions will continue to be made on a reactive basis and inevitably will not provide best value in terms of investment for improvement in education provision or financial sustainability and is likely to involve significant abortive spend.

In response to this senior officers have begun to develop a Moray wide School Estate Strategy. Amongst other factors this Strategy is being informed by:

- Educational needs
- Information from “Schools for the Future” reviews
- Condition and suitability of schools
- Pupil roll forecasts

- The Local Development Plan 2020
- Provision of teaching and staff support
- Local and regional demographics
- Financial costs
- Potential for collaboration across departments and partner agencies.

3.7 The Strategy is in development and will be clearly focussed on educational benefits and long term sustainability. However, early discussions have identified some assumptions that are fundamental to how the approach is developed and before proceeding further, these are being raised with the Committee to assess the appetite for change in these areas.

- Capacity of a school will be determined by local circumstances. The Council's position on this point will enable forward planning based on demographic predictors and for modelling of options to be undertaken more flexibly rather than being based on an arbitrary upper limit which experience suggests is often breached.
- That the needs for education will be aligned with demographic and population change and asset management programmes up to 2035 to deliver a sustainable school estate.
- That there will be a focus on providing schools which will inspire pupils and teachers and help improve the quality of education of all pupils from all backgrounds
- Where possible enhance collaboration and partnership working through shared infrastructure with all public sector bodies and mitigate community impacts through option appraisal.

3.8 The principles of a long term strategy for Morays School Estate will include:

- consideration of how future proposals align with national policies (such as Curriculum for Excellence); outcomes and indicators of
  - educational attainment
  - confidence of children and young people
  - resilience of children and young people
  - engagement in extra curriculum activities
  - young people in learning, training or work
  - skill shortage vacancies
- Enabling the Council to fulfil its own aim of the "Schools for the Future Policy" to be "Ambitious to achieve excellence together" resulting in better attainment and attracting high quality staff.
- consideration of how future proposals will improve the quality of the curriculum and create positive environments for more effective learning and teaching that is better matched to the needs of children and young people taking full account of:-
  - changing patterns of demand for school places;
  - travel and transport options; and
  - financial and budgetary considerations.

- Enabling collaboration with Community Planning Partners to deliver shared infrastructure reducing public sector costs.
- Allowing the full requirements for new school provision, land and developer obligations to be considered at an early stage, reducing the costs to the Local Authority and other public sector bodies through collaboration.
- Allowing informed decisions on new build programmes and in the meantime prioritisation of school maintenance, refurbishment to deliver efficient maintenance and build contracts.

3.9 It is proposed that a draft strategy based on the assumptions and principles detailed at 3.7 and 3.8 above is submitted to a future meeting of this Committee for consideration.

#### 4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)).**

This report supports the Council's corporate working principles of efficiency, effectiveness and economy and the Education and Social Care Department's objective of providing effective, efficient and sustainable premises.

(b) **Policy and Legal**

There are no policy implications arising directly from this report.

(c) **Financial Implications**

Developer obligations in excess of £30 million are at risk if the Council does not plan effectively for school estate provision.

(d) **Risk Implications**

In the event that a strategy is not adopted the major highlighted risks are:

- An inability to maximise external funding
- Further deterioration of the school estate resulting in unforeseen school closures.
- Ad hoc school development which does not take into account wider needs.

(e) **Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications directly associated with this report.

(f) **Property**

There are no property implications other than those detailed in the report.

(g) **Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

There are no equalities or socio economic implications associated with this report.

**(h) Consultations**

Consultations have been undertaken with Head of Financial Services; the Property Resources Manager; the Legal Services Manager, Litigation & Licensing; Equal Opportunities Officer; Head of Development Services, Education and Social Care Senior Management Team and Corporate Directors. Where comments have been received, these have been included within the report.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 That Committee notes that a strategic plan is being adopted and approves the principles and assumptions being followed.**

Author of Report: Nick Goodchild, Educational Resources Manager

Background Papers:

Ref: