

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Lifelong Learning Committee

4 September 2019

SCHOOL ESTATE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME STRATEGIC SITES NORTH WEST/NORTH PERTH

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
(Report No. 19/240)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on the expected house building at the strategic sites at North West/North Perth. It concludes that, due to anticipated house building, a new school is required for this area by approximately 2024 and proposes Bertha Park as the location for the new school.

This report also seeks approval for the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to proceed with options appraisals in relation to the catchment area for the new school, which will also consider implications for the future of Ruthvenfield Primary School and its catchment area.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

School Estate Transformation

- 1.1 The school estate is a significant and valuable asset to the communities of Perth and Kinross. Between 2019 and 2029, the Council will invest £176m in the school estate. This funding supports a wide range of projects including the replacement of Perth High School and Blairgowrie Recreation Centre. A substantial upgrade programme for primary and secondary schools is also being funded. In addition, the new £32.5m Bertha Park High School opened in August 2019.
- 1.2 The School Estate Strategy ([Report No. 12/370 refers](#)) sets out the Council's aspirations for our schools, and in particular the high value we place on learning, through our vision for well designed, maintained and managed schools.
- 1.3 It is important, in light of the significant investment and cost associated with the school estate, that it is managed in an efficient and effective manner, and that the priorities which are addressed meet the wider strategic objectives of the Council and the needs of our communities.
- 1.4 There are significant challenges for managing the school estate over the coming years. These include changing demographics including population

growth and movement, housebuilding in certain locations, ongoing deterioration in building infrastructure, pressure on planned maintenance budgets, increasing revenue costs and the expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare from 600 to 1140 hours.

- 1.5 The Council's Transformation Strategy 2015-2020 'Building Ambition' and Organisational Development Framework were approved by Council on 1 July 2015 ([Report No. 15/292 refers](#)). Together they detail how Perth and Kinross Council will deliver transformation over the next five years. Accompanying the strategy is a programme of major reviews which are considered to be key drivers and enablers of transformation across the organisation. The School Estate Transformation Programme is one such review.
- 1.6 On 24 August 2016, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report No. 16/347 refers](#)) approved principles to be used as a basis for the transformation review, 'Securing the Future of the School Estate'.

The principles approved by Lifelong Learning Committee as a basis for the transformation review were as follows:

- (i) Schools should have an occupancy rate where possible greater than 60% of the capacity and ideally should be operating at over 80%;
 - (ii) Every school should be rated as A or B, ie at least satisfactory for condition and suitability; and
 - (iii) Life expired buildings¹ within the school estate should be prioritised for replacement.
- 1.7 On 2 November 2016, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report No. 16/485 refers](#)) approved the development of a number of options appraisals to consider in detail schools which were identified as requiring further consideration.
- 1.8 The development of the options appraisal is being phased. Phase 1 is nearing completion. Phase 1 schools are:

Abernyte Primary School;
Balhousie Primary School;
Blairingone Primary School;
Braco Primary School;
Forteviot Primary School;
Greenloaning Primary School;
Logiealmond Primary School;
Methven Primary School;
North Muirton Primary School; and
St Ninians Episcopal Primary School.

¹ Life expired buildings are defined as buildings which are uneconomic to maintain.

1.9 Work on phase 2 options appraisals began in August 2018 in relation to the following schools:

- Cleish Primary School
- Grandtully Primary School
- Logierait Primary School
- Pitlochry High School (Secondary)
- Ruthvenfield Primary School

1.10 On 27 March 2019, Lifelong Learning Committee ([Report No.19/94 refers](#)) gave approval to proceed with a number of proposals, for each of the schools in Phase 2, as part of the review.

This report agreed that, for Ruthvenfield Primary School, a detailed analysis of the feasibility should be undertaken to inform options for improving the suitability and condition of the school building. In addition, analysis of house building in the Ruthvenfield Primary School catchment area and surrounding areas, which includes the strategic sites detailed in the Local Development Plan (LDP) at Almond Valley, Bertha Park and Perth West, was to be considered in relation to future plans for the school.

1.11 This report provides an update on the feasibility study for Ruthvenfield Primary School as well as the strategic sites of Almond Valley, Bertha Park and Perth West in relation to house building.

2. STRATEGIC HOUSING SITES

2.1 There is a 30 year masterplan for housebuilding at Almond Valley, Bertha Park and Perth West. The sites are shown on a map in Appendix 1. These sites are at different stages. Bertha Park and the former Auction Mart site in Perth West are the most advanced with development underway. Almond Valley is next with 'in principle' planning permission and a reserved matters application anticipated for September 2019. The wider Perth West site is the least advanced but the [Local Development Plan 2 Examination Report](#) published 11 July 2019 has supported the wider allocation for between 2,392 and 3,738 homes.

2.2 In the next 12 years, based on the current Housing Land Audit (HLA), it is anticipated that 2582 houses will be built. This is estimated to generate approximately 697. (Appendix 2).

2.3 Having previously anticipated that the catchment schools for the strategic sites would not be able to accommodate the projected pupil numbers, the Council allocated funding of £14.35m for a new school within the Composite Capital Programme on 22 June 2016 ([Report No. 16/277 refers](#)).

2.4 It is expected that a new primary school will be required by approximately 2024, based on current information in relation to the phasing of house building at the strategic sites.

3. LOCATION OF A NEW SCHOOL

- 3.1 As part of the negotiation of the Section 75 (S75) agreements with the Council, land at Bertha Park has been transferred to the Council for a primary school and land at Almond Valley has been secured for the siting of a future primary school. As the Perth West site progresses a suitable site will be secured for primary school provision, if required.
- 3.2 Ruthvenfield Primary School is located in the middle of the three strategic sites at Almond Valley, Bertha Park and Perth West, however it is not a suitable location for a new school due to limitations of the current site, particularly in relation to access and roads infrastructure. Whilst the S75 has secured the siting of a future primary school at Almond Valley, in close proximity to Ruthvenfield Primary School, its suitability depends on delivery of improvements to the road network. A reserved matters planning application for road infrastructure improvements is expected by September 2019. However, these improvements are not yet known or consented and the timescale for delivery is not certain therefore it is not considered a suitable site for the 2024 timeframe.
- 3.3 The wider Perth West site was supported through the Local Development Plan 2 Examination Report (11 July 2019) and so its principle should soon be confirmed with adoption of the Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) anticipated in late 2019.

Jointly funded by the Council, the Scottish Government, and two of the landowners, a productive collaborative charrette (design workshop) process involving all the significant stakeholders supported this LDP2 allocation. The charrette also made significant progress on work more associated with the planning application stages with a Masterplan Framework prepared. However, since the principle of the wider site is just being established, Perth West is at an earlier stage and detailed discussions around the masterplanning and delivery will need to follow as and when planning applications progress.

In summary, significant progress has been made quickly. However, in terms of meeting the target of a 2024 delivery for the school, it is unlikely, based on the progress of neighbouring strategic sites, that Perth West could support this.

- 3.4 It is concluded that the site at Bertha Park is therefore the most appropriate and viable location for a new primary school for the following reasons:
- The Council has title to the site;
 - The site has a new road and pathway infrastructure ensuring easy access on foot or by road transport;
 - Utility services are nearby;
 - The site at Bertha Park High School has been scoped for the provision of the primary school therefore bus drop-off etc is already in place and sports

facilities are in close proximity as part of the Bertha Park High School project;

- A large number of the expected pupil population will initially come from the Bertha Park site which has already begun to build out; and
- Due to the availability of infrastructure/utilities available there is limited risk in meeting the timescale of 2024.

4. CATCHMENT AREAS

- 4.1 A defined catchment area will be required for any new school. This will require to be developed in a way which will meet the needs of current and future pupils in light of the significant planned house building within the area.
- 4.2 The new proposed catchment areas will be developed through an options appraisal. The options appraisal will require to consider all of the current catchment areas across all three strategic sites. A copy of the current catchment map, in relation to the strategic sites, is attached in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 As part of the options appraisal process for developing a new catchment, it is proposed to undertake informal pre-consultation with school communities, including Ruthvenfield Primary School and Pitcairn Primary School, which may be affected by any proposed change to catchment areas.

RUTHVENFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL – FEASIBILITY STUDY

- 5.1 Ruthvenfield Primary School was included in the School Estate Transformation Programme due to the condition rating of the school. The overall condition of the building is rated “C” (Poor – showing major defects and/or not operating adequately). The overall suitability of the building is rated “B” (Satisfactory – Performing well but with minor problems).
- 5.2 The capacity of Ruthvenfield Primary School is 91. The current school roll as at 21 August 2019 is 61, which is an occupancy of 67%. 21 of the pupils who attend Ruthvenfield Primary School are catchment pupils and 40 are placing requests. Historic and future rolls are detailed in Appendix 3.
- 5.3 Ruthvenfield Primary School is currently classified as an ‘accessible rural’ school in terms of the Scottish Government’s Urban Rural Classification.
- 5.4 A high level feasibility study has been undertaken in relation to the condition of the school. In order to improve the condition, there are two modular buildings which require to be replaced with permanent buildings within 5 – 7 years. Infrastructure upgrades are also required for statutory compliance upgrades including replacement glazing, heating and lighting. Current estimates for this work is anticipated to be in region of £2m. However, further detailed design work will have to take place to confirm this.

FUTURE OF RUTHVENFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

- 6.1 As detailed previously, Ruthvenfield Primary School is located in the middle of the strategic sites at Almond Valley, Bertha Park and Perth West. This means, in the long term, this small rural school will be in a highly developed housing area.
- 6.2 As Ruthvenfield Primary School catchment sits within the strategic sites and it is being reviewed due to the condition of the building, it is proposed, that to ensure best value and consider all options in relation to the pupils learning environment, that the future of the school should also be considered as part of the options appraisal which will develop a catchment area for the new school.

7. PROPOSALS

- 7.1 A new school will be required to accommodate the expected pupil numbers from the house building at strategic sites to the north and northwest of Perth because the existing schools in the area will not be able to accommodate the projected pupil numbers from the strategic housing sites.
- 7.2 A site at Bertha Park which the Council owns, adjacent to Bertha Park High School, is considered to be the most viable location for a new primary school.
- 7.3 A defined catchment area for the new school is required that will meet the needs of current and future pupils in light of the significant planned house building.
- 7.4 It is proposed that options appraisals are undertaken in relation to the catchment area for the strategic sites and associated areas and that the appraisals considers a new school as well as the future of Ruthvenfield Primary School.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Notes the outcome of the high level feasibility study for Ruthvenfield Primary School;
- (ii) Approves Bertha Park as the preferred location for a new primary school;
- (iii) Agrees that options appraisals, which includes informal consultation, are undertaken in relation to both the catchment for the new school and the future of Ruthvenfield Primary School; and
- (iv) Requests the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to submit the findings of the options appraisals to Lifelong Learning Committee in March 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Author(s)

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Carol Taylor	Service Manager (Resource Management)	ECSCCommittee@pkc.gov.uk 01738 475000

Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)	21 August 2019

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to all of these objectives.

Corporate Plan

1.2 The Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan set out five strategic objectives:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to all of these Objectives.

1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:

- Maximising Resources

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 In addition to the capital funds discussed in the main body of the report, there will be revenue implications for the running of the new primary school. These financial implications will form part of the options appraisals which will be submitted to a future Lifelong Learning Committee.

Workforce

2.2 As a result of this report there will be workforce/resource implications for the ECS Asset Management Team.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 This report forms part of the School Estate Transformation Programme. The objective of the programme is to manage these assets more efficiently and effectively.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

3.1.1 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome and has been assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

3.2.1 No action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal and Governance Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Risk

- 3.5 A risk log is being maintained for the School Estate Transformation Programme.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Legal and Governance Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

External

- 4.2 This report details the consultation proposed in regards to the development of this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 A communication plan has been prepared which will support effective communication and engagement with stakeholders, and to promote the anticipated efficiencies and benefits of this Transformation Project as well as the links to the wider Transformation Programme. A range of methods will be used to consult with internal and external stakeholders as identified in the draft communication plan, such as meetings, briefings, community consultation and focus groups.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt

information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Current Catchment Areas

Appendix 2 – Housebuilding – Strategic Sites

Appendix 3 – Ruthvenfield Primary School