

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 22 AUGUST 2007

SCHOOL ESTATE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2007

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval of the 2007 School Estate Management Strategy and its submission to the Scottish Executive.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since early 2004 Councils have been required to submit annual School Estate Management Plans (SEMP) to the Scottish Executive. Initial plans asked local authorities to detail the state of the existing school estate, their vision for the estate, the required capital investment to meet this vision and timescales within which this vision would be reached.
- 2.2 Scottish Executive guidelines require a full SEMF to be completed every 5 years with a summary document produced annually.
- 2.3 The 2005 SEMF highlighted that investment of £98 million was required to meet the Council's vision for schools and set a timescale of 15 years for this vision to be met. If the schools involved in the Council's PPP schools are removed from the capital figures the actual need is reduced to £70 million.
- 2.4 Cabinet will note that the Scottish Executive have specifically requested this information for primary, secondary and special schools only and that the investment requirements excludes all Early Years and Community Learning establishments.

3. SCHOOL ESTATE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2007

- 3.1 The 2007 SEMF is attached as Appendix 1 of this report. In summary the document:-
- restates the Council's vision for the school estate;
 - provides an update on 2006/07 capital programme works; and
 - sets out how the Council can achieve its desired standards for the school estate.
- 3.2 It is made clear in the SEMF that presently there is a significant surplus capacity in schools. A priority is to address this matter, and this will require future action by the Department of Educational and Social Services. This surplus demands maintenance and resources and therefore restricts the flexibility available to deal with other priority estates – related matters.

4. FINANCIAL / LEGAL IMPLACATIONS

4.1 The capital investment requirements are set out in paragraph 2.3 of this report.

5. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The 2007 SEMP will assist the Council in :-

- Improving community learning;
- Improving opportunities;
- Improving health; and
- Improving the environment

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that Members of the Cabinet:-

- (i) approve the 2007 School Estate Management Plan;
- (ii) agree to its submission to the Scottish Executive;
- (iii) ask the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services to produce future reports to Cabinet on the issue of surplus capacity and
- (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

30 July 2007
RG/MM

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Education Committee – 21 March 2006 – Capital Programme 2006/07

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East Ayrshire **COUNCIL**

Department of Educational and Social Services

Schools Estate Management Strategy

June 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Community Plan and Council's Vision Statement

The Community Plan is the Council's overarching policy document and sets 6 key themes around which the Council and its Community Planning Partners deliver services to the citizens of East Ayrshire :-

- Eliminate poverty;
- Improve community health;
- Improve community learning;
- Improve health;
- Improve the environment; and
- Improving opportunities.

The Community Planning partners have developed the following vision:-

“East Ayrshire Council will be a place with strong, vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs”.

This vision is supported by the Education Committee which has approved the following vision statement for Education Services:-

“The Department of Educational and Social Services is committed to:-

- **providing a choice;**
- **maximising opportunity for all;**
- **developing the potential of individuals; and**
- **meeting needs through inclusion”**

The Council is also committed to providing services which match its key values of quality, equality, access and partnership.

This statement covers every aspect of the Department's work including the management and development of educational establishments. Previous School Estate Management Plans highlighted the development and improvement in the fabric of school buildings as a key component in the facilitation of the learning and teaching process. The Council believes this will significantly contribute to meeting the themes of the Community Plan.

Previous School Estate Management Plans have outlined the 4 key themes of priority to be considered when improving our educational facilities:-

- reducing surplus capacity;
- addressing maintenance issues;
- meeting statutory requirements of DDA legislation; and
- improving property flexibility.

We continue to invest significant resources into our school buildings in a prioritised manner, recognising the long term nature of the modernisation work. We do, however, remain committed to achieving a school estate which will provide positive opportunities for learning and teaching.

Our ***Building Learning Communities*** – School PPP project was given Council approval on 27 April 2006 to proceed to Financial Close. This will see an initial capital investment of £70 million in the school estate and the exciting designs which have been chosen will result in state of the art facilities which meet all aspects of the improvement themes.

In addition to the PPP schools, work due for has commencing on our new build Galston Primary and Nursery School, due for completion summer 2008 we are nearing finalisation of plans for extensions at two schools at Dunlop and Stewarton Academy. Use of the Council's own capital programme and the School Fund has seen significant investment in all of our non PPP secondary and primary schools.

We constantly strive to improve the facilities in which teachers and pupils work and learn. This ensures that buildings can meet the needs of the formal curriculum and adapt to accommodate the flexibility which is required. Our long term vision is to constantly improve the service offered to all learners, regardless of age, and this will allow the citizens and staff of East Ayrshire meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

2. 2006/07 UPDATE

2.1 Introduction

The Council has previously identified its long term themes for improving the school estate, which have been restated in section 1.2 above. The 2006 SEMP identified the following criteria to be assessed before investment or rationalisation decisions are taken :-

- school capacity;
- current and projected school rolls;
- running costs;
- required capital investment;
- changes to the curriculum;
- suitability for curriculum delivery; and
- wider community requirements

2.2 The School Estate, School Capacity and Pupil Rolls

The school estate in East Ayrshire has the following establishments :-

- 11 nursery schools;
- 4 family centres;
- 46 primary schools;
- 9 secondary schools; and
- 4 special schools.

From the last census date of September 2006 there are 5,134 available spaces in primary and 2111 in secondary. As previously reported the school pupil population is expected to fall to 16,915 by 2011. It is therefore evident that further rationalisation of space is required. The Council will continue to examine the methods by which excess capacity can be reduced and the PPP project will make a major contribution by reducing approximately 1,800 places.

When considering rationalisation of spaces the Council is committed to providing high quality local service delivery to support the all the communities of East Ayrshire. Previous Estate Plans have detailed how schools have been adapted to accommodate office and support staff who are not directly involved in the learning and teaching process. The Council takes consideration of the following when determining investment priorities:-

- future roll projections;
- the needs of local communities;
- the current and likely future needs of the curriculum; and
- cost / benefit analysis of spending proposals.

2.3 Work Undertaken in 2006/07

Work undertaken in 2006/07 has improved many aspects of the school estate and is summarised below.

Window Replacement Programmes

In the course of 2006/07 approximately £1,015,000 of the Council's capital programme was spent on continuing the window replacement programme in 14 primary schools. Under the prudential Framework a number of establishments will continue to benefit from this work in 2007/08.

Use of the School Fund has also seen £993,000 invested in window replacement. This funding was allocated to five secondary schools and one primary school.

Electrical Upgrades

During 2006/07 approximately £487,300 was spent upgrading the electrical infrastructure at Bellsbank and St Sophia's Primary Schools and Stewarton Academy. Besides improving the electrical systems within the schools this work will also ensure that increased the use of ICT can be used in curriculum delivery.

A further £455,000 was spent in upgrading the power supply to three secondary schools to facilitate future infrastructure upgrades.

Personal Care Facilities

The rolling programme of introducing Personal Care Facilities into schools was continued in 2006/07. A further facility was created in Auchinleck Academy at a cost of £65,000. This work is a major contribution in allowing the Council to meet its inclusion agenda.

Boiler Replacement

In 2006/07 the Council committed £327,000 to renew boiler plant within three primary schools. This investment has seen the installation of high efficiency boiler plant which will reduce both running costs and consumption.

Staff / Pupil Facilities

During 2006/07 the Council has spent approximately £1.68 million on improving facilities to enhance the fabric of school buildings. This investment covered a number of areas including :-

- upgrades of fire alarms;
- improvements to general classrooms;
- enhancement of PE halls;
- refurbishment of hygiene facilities;
- installation of CCTV
- re-roofing projects; and

- asbestos removal

2.4 External Comment

HMIE

A key action following the HMIE inspection report of the Education function of the local authority 2006 was to continue to improve the school estate. This is also reflected in the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning undertaken by the Accounts Commission in 2006.

External Audit

The Council's External Auditor has also commented on the need to continue investment in the school estate. The Council has agreed that all major investment decisions follow PRINCE2 project management methodology.

3. SCHOOL ESTATE – FUTURE WORK

3.1 Council Vision for the School Estate

The Council set out its vision for the school estate in the original PPP Business Case submitted to the Scottish Executive. This vision has been restated in previous SEMP's and incorporates the following :-

- to meet the ethos of inclusion;
- to be safe and welcoming places for both students and staff;
- to be able to deliver a 21st Century curriculum;
- to be environmentally sound; and
- to provide enhanced community use.

It is by evaluating the criteria set out in section 2.1 above that investment decisions are made and by which the Council will improve the fabric of schools.

3.2 Preferred Option Strategy

The SEMP identifies the following options as the preferred route to meet the vision for the school estate:-

- Continue to reduce surplus capacity;
- Continue the improvements in the school building stock;
- Continue to invest in improving accessibility to schools; and
- Continue improvements in building stock to stimulate wider community use.

These themes underpin all investment proposals for the school estate.

3.3 Resource Allocation

There are 5 primary sources of funds that are used to meet the vision and preferred option strategy for the school estate. These are:-

- Education Capital Programme;
- Central Repairs Account (CRA) Capital Programme;
- School Fund grant from the Scottish Executive;
- Revenue Saving to Fund Prudential Framework Investment; and
- PPP.

Education / CRA Capital Programmes

The Council's resources are allocated to projects in a prioritised manner. The introduction of an asset management database has facilitated the collection and analysis of sophisticated property data. This allows informed decisions to be taken when allocating funds to specific schools or projects.

Recognising the magnitude of the required investment prioritisation is necessary. The methodology used is to assess the criticality of building components and the criteria set out in section 2.1. In 2006/07 the Education Committee allocated £3.5 million to school improvements.

All funding allocations have been scrutinised and approved by the Education Committee. The work will continue the following themes:-

- Electrical upgrades;
- Boiler plant replacement;
- Window replacement programmes;
- General classroom refurbishment;
- Practical subject room upgrades; and
- Building security

Work has commenced on site to construct a replacement Galston Primary and Nursery School. This project is intended to complete on site in June 2008 with occupation thereafter.

School Fund

The Scottish Executive have provided funding of £3.703 million 2006/07. This funding has been predominantly used to continue major improvement works in the non PPP secondary schools. In line with guidance from the Executive the Council is pursuing:-

- Improvements to the fabric of school buildings;
- Alterations to buildings to meet the requirements of class sizes in s1 and s2 English and Mathematics from August 2007; and
- Improvements to ICT infrastructure and use of ICT in the delivery of the curriculum.

Revenue Savings and the Prudential Framework

Under the Prudential Framework revenue savings can be utilised to fund capital investment. Officers are presently examining ways of generating savings which can then be used to augment present investment levels. All recommendations which arise from this exercise will require approval by the Council's Cabinet.

The Executive Head of Finance has confirmed that revenue savings of £70,000 per annum can finance investment of £1 million.

PPP

Financial close was achieved in July 2006, with construction at the four project sites commencing immediately thereafter. The initial investment of £65 million will result in 2 new build secondary schools, 3 primary schools and a special school, with a refurbished and extended primary school.

The Scottish Executive have confirmed revenue support of £4.3 million per annum for the lifetime of the contract. The Council will contribute the remainder of the Unitary Charge through:-

- current revenue running costs of the schools involved;
- savings from staffing as a result of rationalisation;
- central contribution from CRA funds; and
- a Council commitment to underwrite any further funding gap.

The two primary school sites are projected to be handed to the Council for opening in October 2007, with the two campus sites to be handed over in April and August 2008.

3.4 Timetable

The 2005 SEMP set out a timescale of 15 years to achieve the Council's vision for the school estate. This time is consistent with current resource allocations, although the level of any revenue savings which are used to support capital borrowing may shorten the time period.

3.5 Communication Strategy

The Council is proud of its communication with internal and external stakeholders, which HMIE have previously provided very positive comments in this regard. All investment decisions are taken after liaison with school staff and school boards. A strong example of this is the level of Elected Member and officer consultation with pupils, parents and community groups for the PPP project.

The Council actively promotes:-

- Elected Member and officer visits to schools
- Meetings with individual school boards;
- Officer attendance at School Board Forum and Steering Group;

- Discussion of property matters at Head Teacher meetings;
- Full and open public consultation on school estate management issues;
- Distribution of the annual SEMP document to Head Teachers and Chairs of School Boards;
- Liaison with Community Planning partners to promote increasingly integrated working;
- Officer attendance at Community Councils; and
- Discussion of property matters at Pupil Council meetings.

Through these steps the Council is keen to promote further stakeholder involvement in the improvement of the school estate.