

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE - 13 JUNE 2017

SCHOOL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

REPORT BY MARK ARMSTRONG, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - PEOPLE

ABSTRACT

This report seeks committee's approval of the School Investment Strategy, which sets out the vision for our learning environment. The purpose of this strategy is to consider the vision for our learning environment in the context of sustainability and future demands on the school estate to develop a framework which makes the best use of resources.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Children and Learning Committee:

- (i) approves the proposed School Investment Strategy;
- (ii) instructs that implementation plans covering a 5-, 10-, and 30-year plans are brought back to Committee: and
- (iii) authorises the Strategic Director - People to make necessary minor changes to the Draft School Investment Strategy and associated documents arising from the Strategic Environmental Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Appraisal process.

2 ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- Individuals and families are involved in decisions which affect them
- Individuals are involved in their communities
- We have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced
- Individuals are supported in their own communities with good quality services
- Our carbon footprint is reduced

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Children and Learning Committee on 10 November 2015 approved item 10 The Preparation of a School Investment Strategy which would set out a long term framework for improving the school estate. The Report indicated that in recent years Angus Council had invested significantly in the School Estate. Based on the September 2014 Census, the overall occupancy rate across Angus Schools was just under 74%. Closer examination however had shown that some of the schools are very under occupied whilst others are at or close to capacity.
- 3.2 In keeping with the philosophy of transforming Angus, it was agreed to develop a School Investment Strategy to provide a comprehensive strategic framework for the future of the school estate ensuring that the educational needs of all our children are met and to make best use of the resources available. The strategy would identify future demands on the school

estate taking into account demographics, the impact of policy developments and planned housing development. It would also take account of the scarcity of resources available and how best to use them to maximise attainment and achievement and the experience of children and young people in our schools.

4 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Since the above committee report was approved, a number of staff and partners have been involved in developing the strategy. This has involved visiting other local authorities to identify areas of good practice, carrying out literature search, and working with other agencies to develop a strategy to meet the needs of the children and young people of Angus. The strategy is based on our commitment to children and young people and recognises the need to make best use of scarce resources.

4.2 Based on the National Population projections, the number of children and young people aged 18 and under in Angus is projected to fall by 4.32% by 2039. As at 2014 there were 23,845 children and young people in Angus.

4.3 While there is an overall decrease in the number of under 18 year olds, the School Investment Strategy and associated implementation plans will seek to reflect more local population projections, which will be affected by migration and the development strategy set out in the Council's Local Development Plan adopted in 2016.

4.4 The following facts provide some context about our school estate.

4.5 Primary schools

- We have 53 primary schools – one of which is mothballed as it has no children.
- 50 primary schools have nursery classes on site.
- Planning capacities range from 25 to 501 places.
- Occupancy rates range from 14.29% to 100%, however overall the primary school occupancy is 75.27%
- The actual number of children at the September 2016 census was 8,657 with individual schools ranging from 3 to 473 children.
- Based on 2016/17 revenue budgets, costs range from £3,462 to £36,806 per pupil (excludes cost of transporting children and young people to school)
- 54.7% are classed as either accessible rural or remote rural (see appendix 1). 20.3% of our primary age children attend these schools.
- Angus has 6.13 schools per 1,000 population aged 5 to 11 years compared to the Scottish average of 4.97 per 1,000 population.

4.6 Secondary schools

- There are 8 schools in Angus all located in towns. One town has 2 secondary schools.
- Planning capacities range from 800 to 1,270 places.
- Occupancy rates range from 61.1% to 98.2%
- The actual number of children at the September 2016 census was 6,401 with individual schools ranging from 490 to 1,029 young people.
- Based on 2016/17 revenue budgets, school costs range from £5,220 to £8,473 per pupil (excludes cost of transporting children and young people to school).

4.7 Condition of buildings

- 1 of our primary schools is rated poor for condition while 68% of our schools are rated satisfactory.

4.8 Digital connectivity

- 49% of primary schools and 75% of secondary schools do not meet our standard for broad band access.
- 24% of our primary schools have no Wi-Fi access and 50% of our secondary schools have low density and medium Wi-Fi coverage.

4.9 Sustainability

- 67.3% of our primary schools and 85.7% of our secondary schools are rated D or worse for energy efficiency.
- 732 children are transported to primary schools.
- 1,194 young people are transported to secondary schools

5 PROPOSALS

5.1 It is proposed that Angus Council adopt the School Investment Strategy appended to this report. The current school estate will be reviewed against the approved strategy and a further report brought to Children and Learning Committee which identifies a 5-year plan with indicative costs; a consultation plan; a 10-year programmed; and a 30-year strategic plan.

5.2 This approach will ensure that we have a comprehensive and transparent strategy covering all schools in Angus.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this strategy. In reviewing our existing estate and formulating implementation plans the financial implications will be detailed. These plans will be developed within the current financial context of the Council, and assess the affordability of any proposals.

7 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Environmental Implications

7.1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies (PPS), including policies. The Draft School Investment Strategy presented in this report was assessed against this legislation and related Scottish Government Guidance and is considered to constitute qualifying PPS.

7.1.2 In accordance with the requirements of Sections 5(3), 8(1) and Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 the required screening has been undertaken. This concluded that the Draft School Investment Strategy will have no significant environmental effects requiring SEA to be undertaken. This Screening Opinion has been submitted for consideration to the SEA Consultation Authorities (Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage).

7.1.3 Habitats Regulations Appraisal is mandatory under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended. Its purpose is to identify whether policies or proposals may have an impact on the conservation objectives and qualifying features of any European designated site (Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas).

7.1.4 The Draft School Investment Strategy has been screened for likely significant effects on any European designated site. This screening has concluded that the Draft Strategy is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site and that Habitats Regulations Appraisal is not required. This screening opinion has been submitted to Scottish Natural Heritage for their agreement.

7.2 Risks

- 7.2.1 The School Investment Strategy is intended to set the vision for the learning environment in Angus, identify future demands on the school estate and develop a framework for investment over the 30-year period to 2047.
- 7.2.2 Consultation on the SEA and HRA screening opinions detailed above is underway. The timetable for preparation of the Draft SIS (and subsequent consultation) set out above could be affected if it is determined that full SEA or HRA require to be undertaken in developing the SIS.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Report No 436/15, Preparation of a School Investment Strategy For Angus

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