

ANGUS COUNCIL

**CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 5 SEPTEMBER 2019
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**UPDATE ON LEARNING ESTATE TRANSFORMATION ACROSS TAYSIDE AND MONIFIETH
OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

REPORT BY PAULINE STEPHEN, DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report provides an update on the potential opportunities identified for Angus, Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils to work in collaboration on the development of a combined learning estate. The report also provides an update on collaborative opportunities for Angus and Dundee City Councils in the West Broughty Ferry/Monifieth area. Finally, an update is provided on the Monifieth Options Appraisal for the wider learning estate.

Elected Members are asked to note the outcomes of the recent informal consultation undertaken by the three authorities and agree the proposed plan of action arising from this.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Children and Learning Committee:

- (i) Note the outcomes of the recent informal consultation in relation to a potential joint 2-18 community learning campus, in partnership with Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils.
- (ii) Agree that Option 6 of the Monifieth Options Appraisal has been fully explored.
- (iii) Agree that Angus' involvement in a potential joint campus will cease on the basis of feedback and engagement, including opinions about school closures, and financial and educational considerations.
- (iv) Agree that Options 3 and 5 of the Monifieth Options Appraisal will now be the focus of future work to deliver on our aspirations to improve the learning environments for all our children and young people in the Monifieth Cluster Schools.
- (v) Note the implications for the wider Angus Schools for the Future Programme as outlined below.
- (vi) Agree the draft timeline of Angus Schools for the Future activity for the coming year.
- (vii) Note that a review of the Angus Schools for the Future Strategy is due in September 2020.
- (viii) Note that no decision in relation to Barnhill Primary School secondary catchments will be made until Options 3 and 5 have been progressed.
- (ix) Note that the recommendations of this report, if agreed, may be the best course of action for Angus but may impact on the Dundee City and Perth & Kinross learning estates.
- (x) Note that any potential future collaborations with neighbouring authorities will continue to be explored.
- (xi) Note the positive collaborative work with Dundee City and Perth & Kinross councils that has been achieved in progressing this work.

It is recommended that Angus Council:

- (i) Notes the consideration of Children and Learning Committee on 05 September 2019.
- (ii) Note the outcomes of the recent informal consultation in relation to a potential joint 2-18 community learning campus, in partnership with Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils.
- (iii) Agree that Option 6 of the Monifieth Options Appraisal has been fully explored.
- (iv) Agree that Angus' involvement in a potential joint campus will cease on the basis of feedback and engagement, including opinions about school closures, and financial and educational considerations.
- (v) Agree that Options 3 and 5 of the Monifieth Options Appraisal will now be the focus of future work to deliver on our aspirations to improve the learning environments for all our children and young people in the Monifieth Cluster Schools.
- (vi) Note the implications for the wider Angus Schools for the Future Programme as outlined below.
- (vii) Agree the draft timeline of Angus Schools for the Future activity for the coming year.
- (viii) Note that a review of the Angus Schools for the Future Strategy is due in September 2020.
- (ix) Note that no decision in relation to Barnhill Primary School secondary catchments will be made until Options 3 and 5 have been progressed.
- (x) Note that the recommendations of this report, if agreed, may be the best course of action for Angus but may impact on the Dundee City and Perth & Kinross learning estates.
- (xi) Note that any potential future collaborations with neighbouring authorities will continue to be explored.
- (xii) Note the positive collaborative work with Dundee City and Perth & Kinross councils that has been achieved in progressing this work.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

The best start in life for children

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In January 2018 Angus Council approved Item 3, [Report 36/18](#) – The School Investment Strategy 2017-2047 which approved the approach taken to ranking and prioritising the school investment strategy and set out proposals for addressing the needs of Angus schools over a 30 year period. The second priority identified in that report was to undertake an options appraisal exercise for Monifieth High School and all Monifieth cluster primary schools. As part of this options appraisal the Council also agreed to look at leisure facilities in the Monifieth area.
- 3.2 In April 2018 Angus Council approved Item 11, [Report 130/18](#) – Monifieth Cluster Schools Options Appraisal. As part of these considerations it was noted that:
 - 1) Monifieth High School is operating at maximum capacity and school roll projections indicate this will continue until at least 2023.
 - 2) Mattocks Primary School is operating close to maximum capacity and is projected to continue to do so until at least 2023.

- 3) Monifieth High School and Liff Primary School are assessed as C for Suitability.
- 4) Monifieth High School and Grange Primary School have combined outstanding planned maintenance in the region of £1.7m.
- 5) Auchterhouse Primary School is projected to be operating at 39% of capacity by 2023.

Eight possible options were identified in the report. Council approved proposals for engagement on options 2-5, 7 & 8.

Option 1 – Do Nothing was discounted due to the urgent need to address the issues identified in the Monifieth learning estate, as noted above. *Option 6 – Create an All-Through School in the Birkhill Area to incorporate Auchterhouse, Birkhill, Liff and Strathmartine* was identified as a potential opportunity for collaboration with Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils. At the time this option was not considered to be a shared priority for the three councils and therefore not viable.

At the time it was also noted that projects of the scale proposed would require funding support from the Scottish Government's Schools for the Future Programme.

- 3.3 In June 2018 Angus Council approved Item 5, Report [189/18](#) – Monifieth Cluster Schools Options Appraisal Update, expanding the scope of the Options Appraisal to include *Option 6*. The reason for this was a material change in circumstance and an expression of interest from both Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils in exploring the potential for a shared campus. The title of the option was amended to *Option 6 – Work in partnership with Perth & Kinross and Dundee City Councils to create a joint integrated community learning campus serving the south Angus area*. Council also approved proposals to extend the timeline associated with this work, to allow the option to be fully explored.
- 3.4 In January 2019 Children and Learning Committee approved Item 7, Report [36/19](#) – Collaborative Approach to Learning Estate Transformation Across Tayside which set out proposals for a period of informal consultation in relation to a joint integrated community learning campus. Committee also approved proposals for Angus and Dundee City Councils to work in collaboration regarding the West Broughty Ferry/Monifieth learning estate.

4. CURRENT POSITION

Monifieth Options Appraisal Survey - 2018

- 4.1 Following the approval of Report 130/18 an initial period of informal engagement commenced relating to the wider Monifieth Options Appraisal. This comprised engagement with learner representatives, community organisations and an online survey open to the whole community. The survey ran from 12 – 26 October 2018 (inclusive) and 684 responses were received. The survey was shared widely using the Council's website and social media platforms. The survey was also emailed out using Groupcall Messenger to parents/carers from all schools in the Monifieth cluster. Parents/carers from Strathmartine, Newtyle and Tealing were also engaged due to their geographic proximity to the cluster.
- 4.2 The majority (71.9%) of responses received were from parents/carers of children currently attending school in Angus. Responses were also received from children and young people, employees in Angus schools and community representatives. All schools in the Monifieth cluster were represented in the survey responses.
- 4.3 We asked respondents to rank the options in order of their preference from 1 (most preferred) to 8 (least preferred). Weighted scores were then allocated to give an overall view. In summary the top three options were noted as:
 - 1) *Option 3*: Extend Monifieth High School and Mattocks Primary School, and refurbish Grange and Liff Primary Schools (total score = 3,541)
 - 2) *Option 5*: Create an all-through Community Campus (encompassing Monifieth High School and Grange Primary School) (total score = 3,327)
 - 3) *Option 6*: Work in partnership with Perth & Kinross and Dundee City Councils to create a joint integrated community campus, serving the south Angus area (total score = 3,275)

A summary of some of the statistical results is included as Appendix 1 to this report

- 4.4 As part of the wider Monifieth Options survey (2018) we also asked for comments on a number of topics, aligned to our School Investment Strategy. These included the potential realignment of secondary catchments and the facilities that an all-through school could include. We also noted that to deliver *Option 6* could mean that Angus Council has to consider the closure of a number of primary schools. A wide range of responses were received for each question, demonstrating a range of community aspirations.
- 4.5 As a further part of this work in 2018, learner engagement took place with a representative group from the Monifieth Learning Council. The children and young people were asked to give their views on questions similar to those available in the public survey. Overall the young people were most in favour of *Option 3*. Given the small numbers engaged in this activity, it is not possible to draw any other robust conclusions from the activity.
- 4.6 A meeting also took place with Parent Council Chairs in September 2018. Attendees at the meeting were given an early opportunity to view the survey and provide feedback.
- 4.7 Following this Angus-only consultation work in 2018, further discussions took place to determine the potential of any cross-authority approach to future learning estates.

Collaborative Approach to Learning Estate Transformation Across Tayside (Beginning January 2019)

- 4.8 As outlined in Report 36/19, officers from Angus, Dundee City and Perth and Kinross Councils have been working together to explore the potential opportunities offered by *Option 6*. Consideration of *Option 6* at this stage allows us to consider, on a collaborative basis, whether the proposal is viable. Doing this also enables Angus Council to take other decisions in relation to the overall Angus learning estate. A working group has been established and key partners at Scottish Futures Trust and Hubco have been engaged since an early stage.
- 4.9 A working group has been established with officers from the three authorities. As directed by Committee, officers have worked collaboratively to deliver a programme of informal consultation, focusing entirely on *Option 6*. It was agreed that a consistent approach be taken including:
- Engagement with children, young people and other stakeholders
 - Meetings with parents/carers and communities, and
 - Informal consultation via digital engagement strategies
- 4.10 A digital survey was developed jointly by the three councils and hosted on Dundee City Council's survey platform. Links from each council's websites took respondents to the survey. A core set of questions was agreed for the three councils. A specific question was also included for Angus residents about the possibility of school closures relating to the development of a joint campus. While no proposals for closure have been made, it is a consideration in accordance with our stated [10 Reasons for Change](#). We have a commitment to delivering a more sustainable and smaller learning estate.

The survey was available from 23 April to 07 June 2019 (inclusive) and was publicised on Angus Council's website and social media platforms, and shared with parents/carers using Groupcall Messenger. The survey was accompanied by information shared on each local authority's website. The content for the websites was developed collaboratively, with local context added where required. Information for Angus Council can be viewed on the website [here](#).

- 4.11 A series of drop-in sessions were scheduled as follows:

Date	Time	Venue	Angus Staff	Attendees
23 April 2019	3-7pm	Birkhill Primary School	4 senior officers	30
24 April 2019	3-7pm	Harris Academy	1 senior officer	4
25 April 2019	3-7pm	Inchtute Primary School	1 senior officer	30

04 2019	May	10am-2pm	Doubletree Hilton Hotel, Dundee	3 senior officers	30
07 2019	May	3-6.45pm	Madoch Centre, St Madoes	1 senior officer	9
08 2019	May	3-7pm	Birkhill Primary School	4 senior officers	19
09 2019	May	3-7pm	Harris Academy	1 senior officer	12
				TOTAL	134

The dates were publicised using websites and social media platforms, as well as being circulated to relevant school communities using Groupcall Messenger. The dates were also shared with Private and Voluntary Providers of Early Learning and Childcare. Each local authority was represented by officers at the drop-in sessions and presented information as published on the respective websites.

Feedback from Survey

- 4.12 The results of the online survey can be summarised as follows:
- 1) 560 valid responses received from across Tayside.
 - 2) 178 valid responses from Angus Council residents.
 - 3) 61.2% (109) Angus residents support the development of joint 2-18 community learning campus.
 - 4) 71.6% (78) of Angus residents in support of the option would send their child/ren to the campus.
 - 5) 56.0% (61) of Angus residents in support of the option would continue to support the development if it meant the closure of other Angus schools.
 - 6) Feedback gathered through narrative questions identified the potential for closures of rural schools as a concern.

A detailed summary of the outcomes of the informal consultation has been prepared jointly by officers from Angus, Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils. The findings are available at Appendix 2.

- 4.13 Engagement with social media posts relating to the survey and drop-in events was monitored with Facebook posts reaching between 1,806 and 8,683 people.

Feedback from Drop-in Sessions

- 4.14 A range of comments were gathered by officers at the drop-in sessions. The key themes are noted as:
- 1) Views about travel times for some young people attending Monifieth High School
 - 2) Arrangements for holidays between the three authorities
 - 3) The need for investment in existing schools
 - 4) Interest in the development of community facilities in the south Angus area.
 - 5) Whether local road and drainage infrastructure is suitable for a new campus
 - 6) Views regarding potential school closures
 - 7) Interest in secondary provision to be developed

Feedback from Learner Engagement

- 4.15 Angus Council also undertook learner engagement. In Angus, groups of children in P5 to P7 were consulted at each of the following schools: Auchterhouse, Birkhill, Grange, Liff, Mattocks, Murroes, Newtyle, Seaview, Strathmartine and Tealing. Focus groups were also held at Monifieth High School with pupils from S2 to S6 who had previously attended one of the primary schools noted above.

Primary learners were asked to give us their views on what they like best about their current school and what they might like to see if the Council was to build a new school. Secondary learners were asked what they enjoyed about their primary school experience and for their views on their school transport experience. A summary of the feedback is provided at Appendix 3.

Availability of Land for a Joint Community Learning Campus

- 4.16 Hubco has been engaged as a strategic partner to support the local authorities with the consideration of *Option 6*. Consultants have been engaged through Hubco to identify whether suitable sites are available to locate the campus, should the decision be to progress. While the detail of this work is commercially sensitive, the following information can be shared:
- 1) An initial evaluation exercise identified 15 potential sites. The overall search area is detailed on the map at Appendix 4.
 - 2) An assessment of transport links to all sites was undertaken and reduced the potential sites to a shortlist of 4.
 - 3) A desktop geological survey of all shortlisted sites has been undertaken.
 - 4) All shortlisted sites present challenges either in terms of infrastructure or ownership.
 - 5) One site has been noted as viable for further investigation however its location presents other issues which would impact on the configuration of a potential campus.

Funding

- 4.17 As noted in Report 36/19, officers from the three authorities have been engaging with Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) regarding the potential of funding from the Scottish Government. A new national Learning Estate Strategy has been developed. As part of this development, a revised Funding Model has been proposed to support learning estate improvement across Scotland.
- 4.18 The details of the Strategy and Funding Model are yet to be concluded with CoSLA but are likely to be as summarised below:
- 1) There will be £2bn investment in the Scottish learning estate. This will comprise £1bn from Scottish Government and £1bn match funding from local authorities
 - 2) Funding is moving to a fully revenue based model. This means Local Government must fund the upfront £2bn capital investment required to build and improve schools. The Scottish Government will thereafter provide local authorities with revenue funding for their proportion of the funding over a 25 year period. This funding will meet facilities management and life cycle maintenance costs and the achievement of other agreed upon outcomes. Other revenue costs of supporting the school will be met by the local authority without funding support, e.g. teachers and non-domestic rates.
 - 3) The focus nationally is on improving and maintaining schools at Category A and B for Condition and Suitability.
- 4.19 An initial outline capital cost of delivering a joint community learning campus has been estimated at £55.5m, to be shared across the three authorities, with an ambition for construction to commence 2022/2023. It would be necessary for a whole life cost assessment to be undertaken to fully assess the capital and revenue funding requirements for Angus Council but doing this is dependent upon the terms of the yet to be concluded Scottish Government Funding Model. In the absence of this it is speculated that the capital funding requirement for Angus Council would be in the order of £15m-£20m. There would also be an unknown share of the running costs arising from the new school with these all being additional to the Council's current revenue budget.
- 4.20 It is highlighted that this report is not seeking any project funding approval. It should, however, be noted that there is no capital funding agreed for this project at present within the current Angus Council Financial Plan. The Council's capital budget is currently committed up to and including 2022/23. Setting of the next budget in February 2020 will introduce an estimated further £15m in capital funds for 2023/24 but there will be a number of competing priorities for this available funding. Therefore to meet the £15m-£20m funding requirement if this joint project was to progress it would necessitate either:-
- Reprioritisation of the current commitments in the Financial Plan up to 2022/23 and prioritisation of the available funding for 2023/24;
 - Additional borrowing over and above that set out in the Council Long Term Affordability assessment (Report 62/19) with a resultant need to increase the Capital Financing Costs revenue budget.
- 4.21 The Council does not have revenue funding identified to bridge the gap for costs not covered by any Scottish Government funding package. As noted above, feedback from the informal consultation indicates concerns regarding primary school closures. There is no additional revenue funding available to support either a 2-18 campus or a secondary-only facility which

would increase the overall size of our school estate at a time when we know we need fewer school places. Coupled with the potential requirement to service significant volumes of capital borrowing, the progression of a joint community learning campus has significant financial implications for the Council. Some savings could potentially be found in relation to school transportation however further funding would need to be identified.

Informal Consultation Summary

- 4.22 While there is some evidence of support for *Option 6*, the feedback gathered indicates that concerns remain about educational benefits and potential primary school closures in that area. We recognise the attachments held towards the local primary schools mentioned in the feedback and their reported value. This was particularly prominent in the feedback gathered through learner engagement and is in keeping with the themes raised as part of earlier engagement activities.
- 4.23 Some feedback indicated an interest in the development of secondary-only provision in the South Angus area. A secondary-only facility would require an increased revenue commitment. The scope of the informal consultation on *Option 6*, as agreed in Report 36/19, was to assess the level of support for an all-through (2-18) joint community learning campus. It is our view that there is no clear expression of support for the proposal as stated.
- 4.24 On the basis of feedback, particularly in relation to primary school closures, and a detailed consideration of the financial implications, it is recommended that Angus Council ceases involvement in exploring a joint community learning campus.

Partner Authorities

- 4.25 Dundee City Council will be reporting to their Children and Families committee on 09 September 2019. Their position is stated as:

The feedback from Dundee citizens taking part in the consultation supported the idea of a Joint Community Learning Campus. Whilst the consultation response supported the idea of a Tri-council 2-18 Joint Community Learning Campus, progress towards this is only possible where the proposal is deemed viable by all three councils.

- 4.26 Perth & Kinross Council will be reporting to Lifelong Learning Committee on 04 September 2019. Their position is stated as:

In considering all of the information available, including the position of our partner local authorities, it is proposed that Perth and Kinross Council maintain our focus on the improvement of the existing learning estate rather than progress further with the joint community learning campus.

Collaboration on the West Brought Ferry/Monifieth Learning Estate

- 4.27 As agreed at Committee in Report 36/19, it was proposed to also consider opportunities to reinstate the relationship for secondary education provision for Barnhill Primary Pupils (Dundee City Council) at Monifieth High School. In recognition of the ongoing capacity issues at Monifieth High School, this proposal was noted to be dependent on a joint community learning campus being developed in South Angus.
- 4.28 Informal consultation on this topic was planned in parallel with engagement on *Option 6*, using the same principles. A digital survey was developed jointly and hosted by Dundee City Council on behalf of the two authorities. Information was also made available on respective websites.
- 4.29 Drop-in sessions were scheduled as follows:

Date	Time	Venue	Angus Resource	Staff	Attendees
14 May 2019	3-7pm	Barnhill Primary School	1 senior officer		18

22 2019	May	3-7pm	Barnhill School	Primary	1 senior officer	5
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4.30 Dundee City Council undertook engagement with learners from Barnhill Primary. Angus Council officers did not deem it necessary to engage with learners at this stage, due to the extended timescale for implementation of any proposals and the main impact being on the Barnhill community. It was also noted that there would be further opportunities for learner engagement, should the proposal be taken forward.

Feedback from Survey

4.31 The results of the online survey can be summarised as follows:

- 1) 69 valid responses received in total
- 2) 3 respondents had a connection to an Angus school with the majority (54) having a connection to Barnhill Primary School.
- 3) 80% (55) of those responding supported the idea of allowing pupils in the Barnhill catchment to attend either Grove Academy (Dundee) or Monifieth High School (Angus) for secondary education.

Barnhill Proposal Summary

4.32 Until such times as capacity issues at Monifieth High School are addressed, there is no scope for additional pupils to be included in the catchment. At this time, Angus Council can therefore make no commitment to progress proposals in relation to the Barnhill Primary School catchment. We will revisit this position once further progress has been made in relation to the wider Monifieth learning estate. Any substantive proposals would be the subject of formal consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

5. PROPOSALS

5.1 It is recommended that *Options 3 and 5* from the wider Options Appraisal now be explored in more detail. In summary this would include the following activities:

- 1) Progress plans for an extension at Mattocks Primary School (Option 3)
- 2) Progress plans for a refurbishment at Liff Primary School (Option 3)
- 3) Evaluate whether to progress an extension of Monifieth High School and refurbishment of Grange Primary School (Option 3) **OR** replace Monifieth High School and Grange Primary School with an all-through community campus (Option 5)

5.2 With reference to the earlier engagement work on the Monifieth cluster options, it is noted that Options 3 and 5 were ranked one and two when weightings are applied. Consideration of these options will enable us to address:

- 1) Capacity issues at Monifieth High School and Mattocks Primary School
- 2) Improve suitability ratings at Liff Primary School and Monifieth High School
- 3) Potentially address outstanding maintenance at Grange Primary School

5.4 To ensure the pace of change in relation to the Angus learning estate is maintained, we also propose to further progress these additional projects:

- 1) Explore Montrose as a 'Learning Town'
- 2) Assess the need for a refurbishment or replacement of Inverbrothock Primary School

These have already been agreed by Members as priorities for the wider Schools for the Future Programme in Report 36/18.

5.5 A more detailed timeline is available at Appendix 5.

5.6 Further reports will be brought back to Committee as set out in the draft timeline.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 If agreed by Elected Members, a full costing of the proposed projects outlined above will be undertaken. It is likely that some of the funding requirement will be met through the use of

Developer Contributions obtained for use in the Monifieth Cluster. There will also be a requirement to bid for capital funding through the council's budget setting process.

6.2 We will also explore any funding opportunities that may be available as part of the national Learning Estate Strategy.

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 36/18
- Report 130/18
- Report 189/18
- Report 36/19

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Monifieth Options Appraisal – Survey Results

Appendix 2 – Joint Community Learning Campus – Survey Results

Appendix 3 – Joint Community Learning Campus – Learner Engagement Themes

Appendix 4 – High level map of potential sites

Appendix 5 – Proposed timeline for Schools for the Future Work