

ANGUS COUNCIL

ANGUS COUNCIL – 17 DECEMBER 2020

ANGUS SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE – PROGRAMME UPDATE

REPORT BY KELLY MCINTOSH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report provides an update on the Angus Schools for the Future Programme. The report also provides further detail about proposed developments to the Monifieth Learning Estate.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Angus Council:

- (i) Notes the conclusion of the legacy Arbroath Schools Project.
- (ii) Notes the conclusion of the Brechin Rural Schools Project.
- (iii) Approves the identification of a replacement Monifieth High School as the Council's current priority project for the national Learning Estate Investment Programme and notes that a submission for funding has been made to the Scottish Government identifying a new build Monifieth High School as the priority project.
- (iv) Agrees that Grange Primary School is not within scope for the current priority project identified for Monifieth High School and is reprioritised to Phase 3 (2023-28) of Angus Schools for the Future.
- (v) Notes the current status of proposals for Mattocks and Liff Primary Schools, as detailed in the report.
- (vi) Approves the development of an outline plan for public engagement activities as part of the plans for Monifieth High School and delegates authority to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to undertake this.
- (vii) Agrees that in the event that Angus Council is not successful in securing funding support via the Scottish Government national Learning Estate Investment Programme, officers are authorised to progress with developing an alternative programme of work for the Angus learning estate, within existing identified resources, to bring to Elected Members for approval.
- (viii) Agrees that the scope of the Arbroath Secondary Schools project is amended as detailed in the report and will focus on an innovative campus model while retaining the identities of the existing learning estate in the town.
- (ix) Notes that the timescale for bringing forward proposals for the Arbroath Secondary Schools project will be 2023.
- (x) Agrees that the project timescale for bringing forward proposals for the Reimagining Montrose project is extended to 2025.

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 set out proposals for addressing the needs of Angus schools over a 30 year period. Exploration of options for the Brechin Rural Schools was identified as the first priority project.
- 3.2 Statutory Consultation began in February 2018 on proposals to close Stracathro Primary School. On 10 May 2018 it was agreed that consultation on the closure would cease. Angus Council formalised the decision not to close Stracathro Primary School on 07 February 2019. Report [35/19](#) refers.
- 3.3 In September 2018 Angus Council approved the recommendation to close Lethnot and Tarfside Primary Schools (Reports [282/18](#) and [283/18](#) refer). This recommendation was made following the completion of Statutory Consultation. In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 these decisions were referred to Scottish Ministers for consideration. Consent to implement the closures was received in November 2018 and both schools were formally closed on 16 November 2018.
- 3.4 In September 2018 Angus Council also agreed that an extension would be progressed at Edzell Primary School. Report [281/18](#) refers.
- 3.5 The second priority identified in Report 36/18 was to undertake an options appraisal exercise for Monifieth High School and all Monifieth cluster primary schools. Initial options were agreed in April 2018 ([Report 130/18](#) refers) and then amended in June 2018 (Report [189/18](#) refers). A programme of informal consultation on Option 6 - the potential development of a Tri-Council 2-18 joint integrated community learning campus - began in January 2019 (Report [36/19](#) refers). In September 2019 Angus Council agreed that Option 6 had been fully explored and would not progress. Options 3 and 5 were identified as the priorities for further investigation ([Report 285/19](#) refers).
- 3.6 Report 36/18 also identified two other priorities to be taken forward in the phase 2019-23. These were agreed as 'Reimagining Montrose' and a further examination of school provision in Arbroath. It was agreed that this would include consideration of establishing a single secondary school campus, integrated with Dundee & Angus College. A number of other primary schools are identified for review later in this phase.
- 3.7 In addition to the Angus Schools for the Future programme, Angus Council also has an established 'Arbroath Schools Project' which is focused on primary school provision in the town and surrounding areas. The approved phases of this project are now nearing completion and an update is provided below.

4. Current Position

Arbroath Schools Project

- 4.1 As noted above, Angus Council has an established Arbroath Schools Project. All previously approved projects have reached, or are nearing, completion. These are:
 - Phase 1 – Replacement of Timmergreens and Warddykes Primary Schools (2016)
 - Phase 2/3A – Replacement of Ladyloan and Muirfield Primary Schools (2019)
 - Phase 2/3A – Abbeyview Campus to replace Hayshead and St Thomas Primary Schools (2020)

Abbeyview Campus opened in February 2020. Some works are still progressing at the site, including the demolition of the former Hayshead Primary School. These works are due to

complete in December 2020. The disposal of the former St Thomas site is to be progressed by the Estates Team within the Assets Service.

- 4.2 All remaining Arbroath primary schools are now fully incorporated into Angus Schools for the Future programme and have been prioritised for review as set out in Report 36/18

Brechin Rural Schools

- 4.3 The remaining 'live' element of the Brechin Rural Schools project is the completion of the extension to Edzell Primary School. A temporary classroom unit has been in place since January 2019 to allow a full decant while construction progresses. Work was initially scheduled for completion during Summer 2020 but has been delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Formal construction is complete and the extended school is scheduled to reopen in December 2020.
- 4.4 The temporary classroom unit will be relocated to Monifieth High School in early 2021. Further minor works will continue at Edzell to restore the school grounds.
- 4.5 A saving of £150,000 was identified in the Council's Change Programme in relation to the Brechin Schools Project. This saving was delivered in financial year 2020/21.

Monifieth Options Appraisal

- 4.6 In April 2018 Angus Council approved Item 11 – Monifieth Cluster Schools Options Appraisal. At that time 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 grade 'C' for Suitability.
 - 4) Monifieth High School and Grange Primary School have combined outstanding planned maintenance in the region of £1.7m.

The rationale for the Monifieth Options Appraisal remains as previously stated.

- 4.7 The Council's Capital Projects Team has investigated a series of options to carry out improvements to Monifieth High School and potentially provide community and/or primary school provision. Previous estimated costs have ranged from £21.1million for an extension and refurbishment to £66.2million for an all-through community campus to incorporate Monifieth High School and Grange Primary School.
- 4.8 The information in this study was used to inform amendments to the Council's Financial Plan. As agreed as part of the budget setting process for 2020/21, an initial projected budget of £45million was incorporated within the Financial Plan to take forward a new build secondary school for Monifieth High School and explore the feasibility of two potential smaller projects at Liff and Mattocks Primary Schools. As part of this process it was also noted that Scottish Government funding would be required to off-set the capital investment.
- 4.9 The current Learning Estate Strategy for Scotland was launched in September 2019 alongside the first phase of the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP). All local authorities are eligible to benefit from the LEIP and seek support to sustain and improve the condition of their learning estates. Under a shared funding approach, councils must provide commitment to deliver a new / refurbished facility that will achieve and maintain A or B grades for Condition over a minimum period of 25 years. An outcome-based funding model has been agreed which provides funding to councils on the achievement of agreed targets in relation to condition, energy efficiency, digital and economic growth. The premise of the funding is on a 50:50 'like for like' basis to support delivery of these outcomes.
- 4.10 At the last council building survey (2019) and Scottish Government School Estate return (2020), Monifieth High School was graded 'B' for Condition with £1m of identified maintenance required. An independent Building Surveyor, Thomson Gray, have since been commissioned through Hub East Central Scotland to review our surveys and undertake an updated condition survey.

The outcome of this survey recommends that the required maintenance works extend to £4-5million. The report also indicates that the building is now likely to be a 'C' for Condition. This is significantly higher than current identified works. In summary these issues include:

- Ceilings throughout requiring replacements;
- Decoration required throughout the building;
- Replacements to internal doors and ironmongery;
- Replacements to remaining original windows;
- Potential replacements of electrical and mechanical systems in the school

4.11 Thomson Gray have also investigated the feasibility of refurbishment and new build options. This work has indicated that the limitations of the existing building which contribute to the current 'C' grade for Suitability may not be fully addressed by an extension / refurbishment. In summary these issues are:

- Physical limitations to the existing structure including floor to ceiling heights and opportunities to produce natural light;
- Accessibility concerns including changes in level and layout;
- Limitation of existing fabric to introduce a fully modernised services solution;
- Feasibility of addressing all the Scottish Government Programme Targets and Funding Conditions relating to the performance of the building, specifically energy consumption and ventilation strategy.

4.12 In September 2020 all local authorities were asked to provide an update to Scottish Government on their learning estate plans and to identify priority projects for consideration for funding from the LEIP. In light of the available information, a submission has been made for Angus Council identifying a new build Monifieth High School as the priority project. The current estimated cost range of the project is £47-50million. This revised estimate is based on a square metre basis using established metrics. This will be subject to change as the project design stage progresses. A copy of the submission was made available to Members as an Information Schedule to the Children and Learning Committee on 17 November 2020. [Report 275/20](#) refers.

4.13 It is noted that the current proposals for Monifieth High School do not include provision for Grange Primary School to be incorporated into a new build secondary school. The inclusion of Grange in the initial Options Appraisal was based on the level of outstanding maintenance at the school and the potential opportunity for reduced costs if a replacement was taken forward as part of a campus model. However, in terms of overall prioritisation for Angus Schools for the Future, Grange Primary School is ranked 24th and, while the outstanding maintenance remains high, it is comparable to other schools of a similar size, most notably Lochside in Montrose. The cost of including Grange Primary School in a new campus would be in the region of an additional £10m. As Grange Primary School is currently rated B for Condition, this element of a project may not be eligible for funding from the LEIP. The Council would therefore require to meet all capital and ongoing revenue costs associated with this element of an All-Through Campus. This report recommends that Council agrees that Grange Primary School is not within scope for the current priority project identified for Monifieth High School and is reprioritised to Phase 3 of Angus Schools for the Future. Further detail on the proposal for the re-prioritisation of Grange Primary School is set out in section 5 below.

4.14 Community engagement and consultation will be key to taking forward the plans for Monifieth High School. While there will be no requirement for statutory consultation, the same principles will be followed. At an early stage we will identify our key stakeholders. These will include, children and young people, parents / carers, staff and the wider community. The initial phase of the consultation will focus on the design principles and what should or should not be included in a new school. This will develop into further stages of consultation looking at potential designs and settling on a final proposal. In recognition of the ongoing pandemic, we will review how we carry out this engagement. It may not be possible to engage with the public in the way we have previously. That being the case, we will explore digital alternatives for delivery. Assuming approval by Angus Council, a detailed consultation plan will be developed and progressed from January 2021.

4.15 In terms of Mattocks Primary School, an initial feasibility study was commissioned in 2018. This concluded that there was sufficient space for an extension onto the existing building. An initial, budget estimate indicated this could cost in the region of £1.2 - 1.5m for an extension and the refurbishment of the existing building. While no detailed work has been carried out on this proposal, it is noted that pressures on the school roll remain in place at Mattocks. At the time

of writing the school is almost at the maximum capacity of 75 children and there is currently a cap on the school roll to preserve places for in-catchment children. Projections indicate the roll at Mattocks will reach between 78 and 80 children in all years 2023-27. It should be noted there is some uncertainty for the projections beyond 2023. A number of variables could result in the eventual roll being reduced, including Primary 1 deferrals and movement in and out of the catchment area.

- 4.16 It was anticipated that developers' contributions may have been available to partly off-set some of the cost of an extension however no substantial planning applications have been received at this time. Full costs associated with any future extension would therefore need to be met through Council capital funding and considered in the context of affordability for Angus Council.
- 4.17 There are several potential options available to address capacity issues as Mattocks. As well as an extension there are legal options including a review of Angus Council's admissions procedures or a review of the catchment area. A detailed consideration of all the available options for Mattocks will be taken forward during this phase of Angus Schools for the Future and completed by the end of 2023. It should be noted that there may be a requirement to undertake Statutory Consultation as part of this process.
- 4.18 The 2018 feasibility study also explored high level options for a refurbishment and extension at Liff Primary School. The main rationale would be to address the school's current 'C' rating for Suitability. One innovative option would involve an extension to the existing main teaching block to incorporate the gym hall, social space and early years provision. The remaining listed building could then potentially be redeveloped. This idea is very much at a conceptual stage and requires further development. There is currently no dedicated budget to take forward works at Liff. A detailed consideration of the available options for Liff Primary School, including affordability, will be progressed during this phase of Angus Schools for the Future brought back prior to the end of 2023.

Monifieth Options - Resourcing and Governance

- 4.19 A project board will be established for the Monifieth Options Appraisal , with representation from key council services. Terms of reference and other project documentation will be developed as work progresses.
- 4.20 The Council's Capital Projects Team will lead in the commissioning of professional and construction services relating to the development of the design and technical aspects of the project. This is the same approach as taken for the Arbroath Schools Projects, Brechin Community Campus and Forfar Community Campus. Update reports will be brought back to Angus Council as required.

Arbroath Secondary Schools

- 4.21 An initial feasibility study, commissioned in 2018, looked at options for development of the secondary estate across the town. While initially considering the development of a single integrated facility, we are now focusing on an innovative campus approach which retains the existing schools and builds on our partnership with Dundee & Angus College.
- 4.22 This amended scope links closely with the One Public Estate agenda. Officers from across the Council, including the Education and Communities Directorates, have participated in a series of One Public Estate workshops looking at the location of, and access to, services in the town. Although at an early stage of development, the revised scope for the Arbroath Secondary Schools project fits with our vision of a whole town approach to learning and a further integration of the college within the curriculum. As part of this work we will seek to engage with local communities and will determine any requirement to undertake formal consultation as set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. No detailed plans are available at this time. Officers intend to bring proposals to Elected Members prior to the end of 2023, as set out in section 5 below.

Reimagining Montrose

- 4.23 Angus Council has previously agreed to prioritise the reimagining of the learning estate in Montrose. Some initial high-level work has been completed on this project, although at this stage there are no clear proposals to progress. Linking closely to the development of the local Place Plan, our vision is for a Montrose where all learning services are brought together and aligned more effectively across settings to meet the needs of the wider community.
- 4.24 Through our strategic partnership with Hub East Central Scotland we have had engagement with Professor Stephen Heppell to explore opportunities in the town. At our 'Places for Learning' event in 2019 we identified our vision as:
- 'We want a Montrose which makes more of what we already have, to create a place where everything is learning.'
- 4.25 A temporary project officer was appointed for academic session 2019-20. The postholder focused on developing a toolkit for informal engagement in Montrose and completed a series of engagement events with learners. Good links were built with school communities and the events have provided excellent feedback which will help us to take the project forward in the future. A planned series of engagement events for parents / carers were unable to progress due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.26 The proposal is now to continue developing these plans in conjunction with the wider Place agenda. As well as looking at the existing learning estate, this will involve consideration of other public buildings in the town and strengthening links with key industry partners. As part of this work we will seek to engage with local communities and will determine any requirement to undertake formal consultation as set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. To allow for a full development of these ideas we are seeking an amendment to the previously agreed timescale of this projects as set out in section 5 below.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 Angus Council is asked to note that the Arbroath Schools Project is now concluded.
- 5.2 With the conclusion of Edzell extension, all identified priority projects in the Brechin Rural Cluster have now been completed. Angus Council is asked to note that this element of the Angus Schools for the Future Programme is complete.
- 5.3 Angus Council is asked to approve the identification of a replacement of Monifieth High School as the Council's current priority project for the national Learning Estate Investment Programme. If Angus Council does not approve this proposal, it is proposed that officers are authorised to progress with developing an alternative programme of work for the Angus learning estate. Recommendations would then be brought back to Angus Council for consideration in the course of 2021.
- 5.4 Phase 3 of Angus Schools for the Future (2023-28) focuses on schools that have a Suitability rating of C, relatively high occupancy rates and / or significant planned maintenance requirements. Angus Council is asked to agree that Grange Primary School is not included in the proposals for Monifieth High School and is re-prioritised to Phase 3 of Angus Schools for the Future.
- 5.5 Angus Council is asked to note the current status of proposals for Mattocks and Liff Primary Schools.
- 5.6 Angus Council is asked to approve the development of an outline plan for public engagement and consultation in relation to Monifieth High School.
- 5.7 It is noted that plans for Monifieth High School are dependent on securing Scottish Government funding support. In the event that Angus Council is not successful in securing this funding through the current phase, it is proposed that officers are authorised to progress with developing an alternative programme of work for the Angus learning estate within existing identified resources. This may result in the further delay of future projects, including Arbroath and Montrose, to allow re-allocation of resources. Recommendations, including the ability to bid for future Scottish Government funding, would be brought back to Angus Council for consideration in the course of 2021.

- 5.8 Angus Council is asked to agree that the scope of the Arbroath Secondary Schools project is amended and will focus on an innovative campus model while retaining the identities of the existing learning estate in the town.
- 5.9 Angus Council is asked to note that the timescale for bringing forward proposals for the Arbroath Secondary Schools project is 2023.
- 5.10 Angus Council is asked to agree that the project timescale for bringing forward proposals for the Re-imagining Montrose project is extended to 2025.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The funding mechanism for the Learning Estate Investment Programme is as follows:
- 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 on a fully revenue based model. This means Local Government must fund the upfront capital investment required to build and improve schools. The Scottish Government will provide revenue funding to local authorities, to support their proportion of the funding over a 25-year period to 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, eg teachers and non-domestic rates.
 - 3) The focus nationally is on improving and maintaining schools at Category A and B for Condition and Suitability.
- 6.2 The council's current Capital Plan includes a sum of £45m for the Monifieth Cluster Options project of which 50% (£22.5m) was assumed to come from Scottish Government /SFT funding support. Of the Council's assumed share (£22.5m) only £10m is currently "funded" as part of the Council's 5 year capital plans with the remaining £12.5m being "below the line" on the Council's capital projects priority model. This position will be reviewed and updated as part of preparing the Capital Plan for the period 2020-2025 and setting the 2021/22 Capital Budget. Based on the latest cost estimate for Monifieth, a priority bid for £52.1m (gross) has been submitted for consideration through the 2021/22 budget process. This along with the potential for Scottish Government funding will be considered as part of the budget setting process. A project costing £52.1m will not be affordable to the Council without support through the Learning Estate Investment Programme.
- 6.3 As noted, a bid has been made for funding from the Learning Estate Investment Programme. At the time of writing the outcome of this bid is not known.
- 6.4 There are developers' contributions associated with the Monifieth locality which may potentially be utilised towards the funding of a new build Monifieth High School to increase the school capacity. An investigation is required as to the exact legal terms of these and how they can be utilised. An allowance has also been made towards the funding of Early Years provision within a new Monifieth High School, to serve the wider community in the town. This is already identified on the Financial Plan.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As noted in the report, future proposals may require Angus Council to carry out one or more Statutory Consultations under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Should this arise a detailed consultation plan would be prepared and brought back to Angus Council for approval.
- 7.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. There are no equalities implications arising from the content of this report.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, the Director of Infrastructure, the Director of Finance, the Director of Legal and Democratic and the Deputy Chief Executive have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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](#) – The School Investment Strategy 2017-2047
- [Report 281/18](#) – Edzell Primary School Extension Consultation
- [Report 282/18](#) – Closure of Tarfside Primary School
- [Report 283/18](#) – Closure of Lethnot Primary School
- [Report 130/18](#) – Monifieth Cluster Schools Options Appraisal
- [Report 189/18](#) – Monifieth Schools Cluster Options Appraisal Update
- [Report 35/19](#) – Consultation Report on Stracathro Primary School
- [Report 285/19](#) – Update on Learning Estate Transformation Across Tayside and Monifieth Options Appraisal

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