

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Chief Education Officer, Education Services Committee and  
Corporate Asset Manager, Asset Management:  
11 March 2020**

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**Subject: Learning Estate Strategy 2020-2030**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the Learning Estate Strategy 2020 – 2030.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Notes the progress that has already been made in investing in West Dunbartonshire Schools, with investment of nearly £66.6m over the past 5 years; and
- (ii) Approves the Learning Estate Strategy 2020-2030 priorities as detailed in Appendix 1 of the Strategy;
- (iii) Notes that the Capital Plan as reported to Council on 4 March 2020 included funding for the priority projects identified at Appendix 1; and
- (iv) Notes that all projects outwith the recurring capital Building Upgrades budget will be reported to future a Committee meeting for consideration and approval.

**3. Background**

3.1 Since 2015, the Council has successfully delivered an investment of £66.6m across the learning estate to deliver a programme of modernisation to ensure the learning estate is modern efficient, well located and fit for purpose. This investment is all specifically designed to support improved attainment, regenerate communities and attract further investment, improve the economic performance of West Dunbartonshire and modernise the delivery of Council services

3.2 The Council has over 14,500 pupils across its seven secondary schools, 32 primary schools, three Additional Support Needs schools and 22 Early Learning Centres.

**4. Main Issues**

4.1 The Learning Estate Strategy 2020 – 2030 aims to deliver a more extensive and varied learning estate with aspirations to provide facilities which are accessible to and used by our communities all day, every day. It focusses on the continued delivery of high-quality 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environments

which meet the needs of individual children, young people and the wider community.

- 4.2** These improved flexible and adaptable educational environments will support learning, teaching and assessment across the curriculum. The Learning Estate Strategy encompasses all educational and early learning centres in West Dunbartonshire and recommends significant capital investment on buildings based on an assessment of a range of factors including: physical condition; current and future school roll; suitability for delivering education, learning and attainment; and achievement of best value for the communities of West Dunbartonshire. The Learning Estate Strategy will be continuously reviewed and informed by Council and committee decisions and in line with the annual review of the Capital Plan.
- 4.3** The Learning Estate Strategy sets out the proposed projects for delivery on a phased basis over the 10 year period. Previously identified priorities were: a requirement for a new Renton Campus incorporating the existing primary school, language unit and provision of a new 0-5 early years establishment. Work commenced onsite in February 2020 to which the Council has committed £15.1m. In addition, the Council has committed £0.850m for the refurbishment of St Mary's Primary School, Alexandria and £0.800m for the refurbishment of St Martin's Primary School, Renton.
- 4.4** Scottish Government Funding for the early years expansion programme (1,140 hours) has enabled the creation of additional early years facilities across our learning estate.
- 4.5** The next phase of the Strategy recommends as the top priority, the development project for a new co-located campus encompassing: Edinbarnet and St Joseph's Primary Schools; Auchnacraig Early Learning Centre; Faifley Library; and an integrated Skypoint Community Facility.
- 4.6** The intention would be to submit funding applications to the Scottish Government Learning Estate Improvement Programme (LEIP). It is understood that the LEIP will support local authorities to construct new build learning environments providing up to 50% of funding required for the educational element only. It is a requirement included in the criteria, that, whilst funding is only applicable to the educational element, the bid must include further community use. It is expected that bids would be required to be submitted to the Scottish Government in June 2020 with the outcome of bids set to be announced in September 2020. The Capital Plan reported to Council on 4 March 2020, includes funding for these priority projects. Officers will seek to maximise national funding from Scottish Government in order that the needs identified through the Learning Estate Strategy can be addressed. Priorities will be reviewed as and when any new funding is announced.
- 4.7** It is recommended that initial informal consultation should be carried out with the communities involved in priority projects. Where appropriate, statutory consultation will be undertaken, subject to future Committee approval.

**4.8** Funding is also set aside as part of the Council's capital Plan (Building Upgrades) for investment to improve the condition of the existing learning estate. Recent examples of these projects include the refurbishment of St Ronan's Primary School in Bonhill and the creation of the new Lennox Primary School. As part of the existing Building Upgrades budget refurbishment works will take place across West Dunbartonshire over the next 10 years and where possible the aspiration is to design learning estates to ensure communities have access to and make use of facilities all day, every day. Secondary school buildings would also be scoped to assess their suitability to create additional support provision as well as to determine whether skills academies could be developed in the buildings. Where the spend lies within existing Building Upgrades capital budget this will be reviewed annually with a view to ensuring that learning, community and Council priorities are being addressed.

## **5. People Implications**

**5.1** There are no people implications with this report at this stage.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

**6.1** The adoption of the Strategy itself has no direct financial implications, but should the priority projects be approved at a future Committee, then capital investment is required as indicated in Appendix 1.

**6.2** £4m remains unallocated in the current capital plan with a further £25.8m added to the plan in the Report to Council 4 March 2020. As previously stated priority projects would require to be approved by Committee before budget is allocated.

**6.3** Revenue implication of the Strategy will require to be considered as updates are provided to future Committees. .

**6.4** There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

**7.1** There is a risk that if the recommendations are not approved, that when we submit the application for funding from Scottish Government , it may not be successful.

**7.2** There is the potential for reputational risk arising from public opposition to proposals.

## **8. Environmental Sustainability**

**8.1** The Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation is not required for the purpose of this report but will be considered and taken into account as part of

the planning application assessment as a result of any projects arising from this strategy.

## **9 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**9.1** Any proposals for learning estate arising from the implementation of this strategy will be subject to full EIAs if appropriate.

## **10. Consultation**

**10.1** Consultations have been undertaken with officers from Regeneration, Finance, Legal and Education Services.

**10.2** Wider consultation will take place during the implementation of the proposals as outlined in this report.

## **11. Strategic Assessment**

**11.1** This report reflects the Council's Strategic Priorities for 2017-2022 to have a strong local economy, improved employment opportunities and efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents.

**Laura Mason**

Chief Education Officer

**Craig Jardine**

Corporate Asset Manager

Date: 19 February 2020

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Learning Estate Strategy 2020-30

**Background Papers:** Report by the Executive Direct of Educational Services and the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration 13 August 2014.

**Wards Affected:** ALL