

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by the Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 16 March 2022**

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**Subject: Expansion of the School Learning Estate****1. Purpose****1.1** The purpose of this report is to:

- Update the committee on outcomes of the learning Estate workstream of the ASN (Additional Support Needs) Strategy; and
- Inform the committee on projected needs, plans and associated costs of the proposed expansion.

**2. Recommendations****2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- Note the progress of work and identified growth projections;
- Agree suggested phases of development and associated capital works;
- Instruct officers to prepare to undertake statutory consultation on Phase two of the proposal for expansion and
- Agree to allocate funding as per 4.6 and 4.7 from the unallocated School Improvement capital plan.

**3. Background**

**3.1** In line with national trends, it is recognised there is an increasing number of pupils with a complexity of Additional Support Needs (ASNs) in West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC). This has previously been addressed with the expansion of our Primary ASN provision. However, it is now necessary to expand the secondary provision as this cohort moves through primary to secondary school and to address projected needs until 2027.

**3.2** Committee approved the Learning Estate Strategy 2020-2030 at Education Services Committee on 11 March 2020. Within that report an indicative £300,000 was allocated to future ASN expansion.

**3.3** Educational Services and the Asset Team have progressed planning work for the proposed ASN expansion, including Kilpatrick School and reviewed the wider learning estate to consider best use of resources to meet projected needs. It is proposed this expansion will be considered in three distinct phases. Phase one is the expansion of Kilpatrick School, phase two the

establishment of a new base using the old Riverside Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC) setting and phase three the expansion of the Choices building.

#### **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** Projections shown in Appendix 1 demonstrate a significant potential increase in overall school roll of Kilpatrick.
- 4.2** By 2027 it is anticipated there will be need for an additional nine Secondary ASN classes for severe and complex learners within our learning estate.
- 4.3** Senior Leaders have identified that most of the projected cohort of pupils attending will come from the new ASN bases in St Joseph's, St Kessog's and Renton PS. It is recognised these young people will need a significantly different curricular experience from that of a mainstream Secondary; one which is more personal and bespoke with a focus on life skills and wellbeing.
- 4.4** Phase one expansion work will be to provide additional capacity at Kilpatrick School. Initial scoping has been carried out at the campus indicating that an extension or a new separate annex to the existing building is viable. This requirement was not previously anticipated and is therefore not within the £300,000 previously allocated at Committee on 11 March 2020. This expansion would provide additional space for 3 classes which would meet the immediate needs of pressures in 2022-'24. This expansion falls short of having capacity to meet the projected needs from 2024-'27.
- 4.5** It is unlikely that the new facility would be in place by August 2022 and therefore temporary accommodation will be required whilst the building is completed.
- 4.6** The anticipated additional allocation of funding required for this provision is £900,000 based on the current feasibility design and therefore an additional £900,000 is required from the current unallocated funds within the capital plan for School Improvement.
- 4.7** Phase two of the expansion is the adaptation of the vacated Riverside ELCC at St Martin's Primary. This site provides good quality accommodation which is suitable for use as a school for severe and complex learners; particularly those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as referenced in 4.3. This would be needed at the latest by the start of session 2024 and would provide accommodation over the subsequent three years for 36 young people.
- 4.8** In addition to the need to expand settings for severe and complex learners, there is a need to ensure appropriate provision for the cohort of learners who cannot engage in mainstream settings due to challenging social and emotional issues. Currently this cohort is supported in WDC at our Choices School and by partner providers such as Mirren Park and Ardfarn Lomond and Johnstone. As part of the Phase Two expansion adaptation will be

required to a currently unused part of the current Choices facility (formerly Jamestown ELC).

- 4.9** Adaptation works to current estate was anticipated at the time of Learning Estate Strategy and as advised £300,000 was previously allocated at Committee on 11 March 2020. It is anticipated that the works, based on the current feasibility design will be in the region of £345,000 and therefore an additional £45,000 is required from the current unallocated funds within the capital plan for School Improvement
- 4.10** We have been informed that Ardfern Johnstone will close by December 2021 and the pupils currently placed there will transfer to the Lomond site. This will therefore reduce their capacity to support new placements. Expansion of the Choices campus to use the remaining side of the building will provide further opportunity to meet needs in WDC settings.
- 4.11** It is recognised that additional resource will be required to support the need for staffing in the expansion plans. This could be viewed as spend to save given the far higher costs of using alternative providers. In 2021/22 there have been 8 external providers used by the Council for day placements. The average cost of a placement is almost £32,000 per annum (with a range of between £22,000 and £140,000 for the providers used in the current financial year). In 2021/22 there have been 13 external providers used by the Council for residential placements. The average cost of a placement is over £118,000 per annum (with a range of between £51,000 and £190,000 for the providers used this year). The cost of employing one additional teacher along with two learning assistants would be around £100,000 per annum and this level of resource could accommodate between 6 and 8 children who may otherwise have to be educated through a day or residential placement
- 4.12** It is anticipated that there will be additional transport costs included in the overall expansion costs. These are difficult to specify exactly as it will depend on pupil addresses, abilities to travel independently and provider costs at the time. However, approximate costs are anticipated at around £100-150k based on 36 pupils based on current suppliers.

## **5. People Implications**

- 5.1** The potential people implications are positive as the expansion could result in the creation of 29 additional teaching and support posts. This will provide an exciting and challenging opportunity for staff to develop skills in working collaboratively to provide alternative learning experiences in learning spaces which meet the needs of young people with severe and complex learning difficulties.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1** There are additional financial implications as a result of this report. However, costs to Council will be significantly higher if we are unable to meet the needs

within WDC settings, due to the much higher charges of private providers as detailed in 4.11.

- 6.2 £1.2m remains unallocated in the current capital plan with a further £25.8m added to the plan in the Report to Council 4 March 2020. Approval of this paper would bring the unallocated amount down to £260,000. Priority projects would require to be approved by Committee before budget is allocated.
- 6.3 All procurement activity carried out by the Council in excess of £50k is subject to a contract strategy and subject to approval, where necessary, and before any tender is published or framework entered into.

## 7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1 If the Council is unable to ensure positive outcomes for children, we will not be meeting their needs (Children and Young People Act 2014) (Equalities Act 2010).
- 7.2 If the Council is unable to meet the needs of children, young people and families this could result in reputational damage.

## 8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1 The revised supports and guidance enhance the quality of the service provided to all children, young people and families, therefore it can be seen to have a positive impact in terms of the equalities

## 9. Consultation

- 9.1 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

## 10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

**Laura Mason**  
**Chief Education Officer**  
**9 February 2022**

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1 - ASN Projections

## Equalities Impact Assessment

**Background Papers:** Report by Chief Education Officer: Education Services Committee: 11 March 2020. Subject: Learning Estate Strategy 2020-2030

**Wards Affected:** All