

The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee
2nd December 2014

Agenda Item	12
Report No	CIA/65/14

Primary School Roll Pressures in Inverness

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

This report identifies some emerging issues as a result of increasing school rolls at primary schools in Inverness. The purpose of the report is to highlight some of the further work that will be required to fully explore these matters, and the types of solutions which will require further consideration.

1 Background

- 1.1 The guidance document “Determining Primary School Capacity” was published by the Scottish Government on the 24th October 2014. It is recommended that Local Authorities, if they choose to do so, implement this guidance from January 2015 for the start of the new school session in August 2015 where possible.
- 1.2 It was generally agreed during the consultation period prior to the publication of the document that providing guidance on calculating Secondary School capacities was not a priority at this time. However, it is recommended that all Scottish Local Authorities consider a consistent approach to calculating the capacity of Secondary Schools and seek to work together to develop this by 2016.
- 1.3 The Education, Children and Adult Services Committee approved a report on 12th November 2014 and agreed to the following recommendations:
 - That Highland Council adopt the Scottish Government guidance along with a methodology that would determine the Planning Capacity of each primary school and identify schools whose roll was likely to exceed this figure at any point over a 15 year period based on future roll projections;
 - That consideration may be given in future to the application of the Primary School Teaching Entitlements;
 - That consideration will be given to capping school rolls and refusing placing requests, where deemed appropriate, from January 2015 onwards;
 - That any short to medium term requirements for additional classes in schools will continue to be managed where necessary by either using general purpose areas as classrooms or providing temporary accommodation;
 - That work should continue in analysing the pressures affecting schools in Inverness in the future as part of the wider Sustainable School Estate Review in order to allow the outcomes to be taken into account in any future review of the Council’s capital programme;
 - That further consideration be given to the measures required in relation to the immediate pressures affecting Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis as well as

the longer term requirements for additional accommodation in order to meet the anticipated future demand for places;

- Finally, that the City of Inverness Area Committee should be briefed on these matters and that further discussions should take place at Ward level.

1.4 This report deals exclusively with capacity issues relating to primary schools in Inverness. Capacity within secondary schools and wider aspects of primary/secondary building condition will be appraised as separate work streams, and in the context of the Sustainable School Estate Review and capital programme processes.

2 Inverness City Primary Schools

2.1 Members will be aware of the school roll pressures that have been experienced across a number of primary schools in Inverness in recent years, and have led to some of the extensions and other solutions that are already in place. This, together with the implementation of updated capacity modelling, is likely to result in a number of schools in Inverness nearing or exceeding their Planning Capacity in the near future. Rolls may also continue to rise thereafter in some cases.

2.2 It is apparent that a new primary school will be required to be built at some point and there is a site reserved at Ness Castle. A detailed examination of the roll projections is required to assist in determining when the new school would be required and what additional overall capacity would be required in order to meet future demand. This work will be undertaken as part of the wider Sustainable School Estate Review and this will allow the outcomes to be taken into account in any future review of the Council's capital programme

2.3 It is likely that extending some of the affected schools would not be recommended due to the core ancillary accommodation not being sufficient to support a significant increase in pupil numbers. In these instances, it may be necessary to accommodate some short to medium term increases in the roll by using General Purpose rooms as classrooms or by bringing temporary accommodation on to the school campus. Capital investment may be the preferred option where it is likely that the Planning Capacity will continue to be exceeded into the longer term, but it may also be necessary to consider capping the roll and refusing placing requests where appropriate.

2.4 As options are developed, in particular any requiring capital investment, these will have to be considered in the context of the overall capital programme, and prioritised and programmed accordingly. With constraints on available capital, there will have to be a balance struck between short versus longer term solutions, and the affordability and deliverability of proposals. Any new capital investment requirements will be assessed as part of the next capital programme review, expected to take place during the early part of 2015.

2.5 The purpose of this report is simply to highlight some of the issues which will require to be considered going forward. There will be further work undertaken in relation to roll projections and capacity modelling, and discussions will take place with Head Teachers and with Members at Ward Level in relation to the options to be considered. The following section identifies those schools that have been identified in the initial assessment as being likely to approach or exceed their

Planning Capacity figures in the initial five year period under review (i.e. 2014/15 to 2018/19).

3 Main Pressures in the Next Five Years

3.1 Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis

There is a particular issue at this school as it is anticipated that future demand is likely to exceed the number of available places. However, the core of the school was designed to support a single stream school and the ancillary accommodation is not sufficient to support a larger amount of pupils (this would be particularly the case in respect of dining facilities). In the short term, consideration may have to be given to moving classes off site. In the longer term, if it proves impractical to construct an annexe adjacent to the school, then it may be that consideration should be given to building a new school on a different site that could in time expand into a two stream school. This would obviously need to be appraised in conjunction with the wider review of the pressures across Inverness and the possible timescale for providing a new school at Ness Castle.

3.2 Charleston Academy Associated School Group (ASG)

The school roll of Kinmylies Primary is projected to increase steadily over the coming years, although it is likely to remain within the Planning Capacity for at least the next five years. This will need to be closely monitored to see if the situation changes significantly but there is no immediate cause for concern.

3.3 Culloden Academy ASG

The rolls at Cradlehall Primary and Smithton Primary are projected to increase over the next five years and may exceed their Planning Capacity figures. These will require to be examined together and the potential impact of any future actions on any of the other schools in the ASG will need to be assessed.

3.4 Inverness High ASG

Merkinch Primary is likely to exceed its Planning Capacity in the next five years. It has the ninth lowest overall building condition score based on the results of the recent surveys that were published earlier this year. There are also issues with the suitability of the accommodation at the school and the roll is projected to rise for the foreseeable future. Two modular classrooms were installed during the summer holiday period to help relieve the pressure at the start of the current session and improvement works were carried out to some classrooms. A feasibility study to establish the investment that would be required to bring this school up to an appropriate standard has been initiated.

3.5 Inverness Royal Academy ASG

The rolls at Holm Primary and Lochardil Primary are projected to increase over the next five years and may both exceed their Planning Capacity figures. Also, Hilton Primary is currently under pressure. There is a general trend of a steady increase in the projected total number of pupils in the ASG over the 15 year period, which is largely due to the anticipated rate of house building. As outlined in Paragraph 2.2, a new school will be required at some point on the Ness Castle site and it will be necessary to determine when this would be required. In the meantime, it may be necessary to identify a range of options to deal with the demand for places within the ASG until a new school is operational.

3.6 **Millburn Academy ASG**

Both Inshes Primary and Milton of Leys Primary are likely to exceed their Planning Capacity figures during the next five years. The roll at Inshes is projected to continue to increase beyond this period while the Milton of Leys roll will peak and then fall back to a more manageable level. Again, a range of options will have to be considered and the potential impact of these on other schools to be fully assessed.

4 **Summary**

4.1 It is clear that there are a number of schools in Inverness that are potentially facing significant roll pressures over the next five years and beyond. There are a range of options that are available to address these in the short to medium term and it may be that a combination of two or more of these will be necessary in some cases. As has been stated earlier in this report, the availability of capital funding may have an impact on some of the recommendations that will eventually be proposed. However, the adoption of the revised approach to primary school capacity modelling will result in the main pressures being identified at an early stage. These can then be taken into account, along with the various other factors that may affect school provision in the future, in any forthcoming decisions on capital investment in the school estate.

5 **Implications**

5.1 Resource – The work that has been carried out to date and that will be required in the future is within the framework of the ongoing Sustainable School Estate Review process.

5.2 Legal – A consistent approach to school capacity modelling will enable the Council to identify measures required to meet its statutory obligations.

5.3 Equalities – The review will take account of the need for appropriate accommodation to be provided for pupils with additional support needs.

5.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – Any outcomes will be taken into account when planning major capital investment projects.

5.5 Risk – A consistent approach will allow the Council to identify any relevant risks as part of the future capital investment decision making process and for alternative measures to be put in place in the event that capital funding is not available.

5.6 Gaelic – The review process in Inverness has clear implications for enhanced Gaelic-medium provision and for provision at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.

5.7 Rural – One of the aims of the revised methodology is to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the School Estate.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note that:

- 1) Work will continue in analysing the pressures affecting primary schools in Inverness as part of the Sustainable School Estate Review to allow the outcomes to be taken into account in any future review of the Council's capital programme;
- 2) Further consideration will be given to the measures required in relation to the immediate pressures affecting Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis as well as the longer term requirements for additional accommodation in order to meet the anticipated future demand for places.
- 3) Further discussion will take place with Head Teachers and at Ward level to keep Members fully updated.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 21st November 2014

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Background Papers

Report to Education, Children and Adult Services Committee on 12th November 2014 – http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/66912/item_9_primary_school_capacity_modelling_and_roll_pressures_in_inverness

Determining Primary School Capacity – Link to Document on the Scottish Government Website - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/Buildings/commitments>