

The Highland Council

Education, Children and Adult Services Committee 11 February 2015

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	ECAS 22/15

Inverness Primary Schools Update

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

This report advises of progress in analysing the effect of the roll pressures facing primary schools in Inverness. It also identifies the most immediate priorities for future capital investment and some of the other measures that may have to be introduced.

1 Background

- 1.1 This Committee agreed the following recommendations in November 2014:
- That Highland Council adopt the Scottish Government Guidance on Determining Primary School Capacity;
 - To adopt the recommended approach in relation to determining Planning Capacity and identify the schools that are likely to exceed this figure at any point over a 15 year period based on the roll projections;
 - That consideration may be given in future to the application of the Primary School Teaching Entitlements in instances where schools would be able to accommodate a higher number of pupils in a particular session;
 - That consideration 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.
 - That there will be further discussion at City of Inverness Area Committee and at Ward Business Meetings to progress discussions on the Inverness Primary School issues.
- 1.2 A report was submitted to the City of Inverness Area Committee in December 2014. Briefings on the matters included in this report have been provided at business meetings for all of the Inverness Wards, with the exception of Ward 17 which will take place later this month. These briefings will continue over the coming weeks to keep Members informed of progress. Discussions have started to take place with the Head Teachers of schools that are likely to be affected by the proposed measures and these will continue and be expanded to include Parent Councils where required.

- 1.3 A review of the Council's overall 10-year capital programme is currently underway, and the outcome of this will determine the amount of capital funding that will be available in future years.
- 1.4 This report deals exclusively with capacity issues relating to primary schools in Inverness. Capacity within secondary schools and wider aspects of school building condition will be appraised in the context of the Sustainable School Estate Review and capital programme review processes.

2 Current Position

2.1 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. Beyond this, additional accommodation is likely to be required at some point. This will need to be closely monitored to see if the situation changes significantly and also what the impact may be on Muirtown Primary in the future.

2.2 Culloden Academy ASG

The rolls at Cradlehall Primary and Smithton Primary are projected to increase over the next five years and exceed their Planning Capacity figures. A feasibility study into a possible extension at Smithton is nearing completion, and it is likely that this will be recommended as a priority in order to provide additional capacity within the ASG. It may also be necessary to refuse placing requests at Cradlehall.

2.3 Inverness High ASG

Merkinch Primary is likely to exceed its Planning Capacity in the next five years. There are also issues with the building condition and the suitability of the accommodation, and the roll is projected to rise for the foreseeable future. Two modular classrooms were installed during the last 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 is underway to establish the level of investment that would be required to bring this school up to an appropriate standard. Depending on the timescale for any capital project, it may be necessary to install further temporary classroom accommodation as a short term measure.

2.4 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 future house building. A new school will be required at some point on a site reserved in the Ness Castle development. This site is due to be gifted once 380 houses have been built and it is anticipated that this is unlikely to happen until well into the second half of the Council's 10-year capital programme. In the meantime, it will be necessary to identify a range of potential options to deal with the demand for places across the ASG.

2.5 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 manageable level. As a result, it will be necessary to use general

purposes areas as classrooms at Milton of Leys, and possibly refuse placing requests at Inshes.

2.6 **Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis**

As previously reported, 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 building was designed to support a single stream school, and the ancillary accommodation is not sufficient to support a larger amount of pupils. In the short term, it may be necessary to move classes off site. In the longer term, the option of building a new school on a different site that could in time expand into a two stream school is currently being appraised in conjunction with the wider review of the pressures across the Inverness Royal Academy ASG and the likely timescale for providing a new school at Ness Castle.

2.7 **Other Pressures**

The review will also take into account the current facilities and future demand in respect of provision for Early Learning and Childcare and also for pupils with Additional Support Needs across the Inverness area.

3 **Placing Requests**

- 3.1 It is apparent that we may have to refuse placing requests to several schools for the 2015/16 session. This decision will be made by the Area Care & Learning Manager and Head of Education, ahead of the deadline for submitting requests, which is in mid-March. The schools most likely to require to be capped at this stage are Cradlehall, Inshes and Lochardil, although the potential impact of these measures may cause other schools to be considered as well.

4 **Implications**

4.1 **Resources**

It is clear that the most immediate capital investment priorities are at Merkinch and Smithton, along with a solution for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. At the same time, there is a requirement to ensure that there is suitable accommodation in respect of Additional Support Needs and Early Learning and Childcare provision in the future.

- 4.2 The rate of development at Ness Castle and Ness-Side will have an impact on schools in the Inverness Royal Academy ASG and some further investment or temporary accommodation may be required until such time that a new school at Ness Castle may become operational.

- 4.3 Capital investment may also be required at Kinmylies, and possibly also Muirtown, but it is likely that this would be in the second half of the 10-year period of the capital programme. However, both schools will be assessed later this year to determine what expansion would be feasible.

- 4.4 The proposed capital investment, together with a range of short to medium term measures, would create additional capacity and start to relieve the pressures facing some schools. However, the availability of capital funding will be dependent on the outcome of the review of the Council's overall capital programme along with current and future priorities.

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

- 4.6 **Equalities** – The review will take account of the need for appropriate accommodation to be provided for pupils with additional support needs.
- 4.7 **Climate Change/Carbon Clever** – Any outcomes will be taken into account when planning major capital investment projects.
- 4.8 **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.
- 4.9 **Gaelic** – The review process in Inverness has clear implications for enhanced Gaelic-medium provision and for provision at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.
- 4.10 **Rural** – One of the aims of the revised methodology is to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the School Estate.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to note and comment on the priorities for future capital investment and the other potential measures outlined in this report.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

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