

CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL

Report to Clackmannanshire Council

Date of Meeting: 6 October 2022

Subject: Lochies Primary School Options Appraisal

Report by: Pete Leonard, Strategic Director Place

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the high-level options appraisals undertaken for Lochies Primary School. Council is asked to note the terms of the options appraisals and agree to progress the recommendations contained therein.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 2.1. The Council notes the terms of the recommendations in the options appraisal for Lochies presented in this paper at section 3.5.
- 2.2. The Council agree that based on the options appraisal recommendations, a public consultation process, involving Education Scotland, will take place to relocate a new build Lochies to the Pavilions site at Alloa West.
- 2.3. The Council agree to submission of a bid to the Scottish Government Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) for a replacement for Lochies, noting that this funding will be in the form of revenue funding as described in section 4 of this paper.
- 2.4. The Council notes that a further paper will be brought back to a future Council on the LEIP bid outcome and progress on the public consultation process to relocate Lochies.
- 2.5. The Council notes that the next stages are to complete site feasibility studies and RIBA design stages to provide more detailed costings on a relocated Lochies. The outcome of which will be brought back to Council for formal budgetary approval.
- 2.6. The Council notes that a further paper will be brought back to a future Council on the outcome of the high-level options appraisal for Deerpark Primary School.

- 2.7. The Council notes that a further paper will be brought back to a future Council on the outcome of the high-level options appraisal for St Mungo's Primary School.

3.0 Background – Lochies Primary School

- 3.1. During the 2021-22 academic year, the Council undertook surveys of its entire learning estate by assessing them against the School Estates Core Facts Survey criteria that Scottish Government use to ensure consistent reporting across Scotland on the condition and suitability of school buildings. Lochies was the only school in the Authority to be graded as a category D “unsatisfactory” in the suitability category. The condition of the building was assessed as being category C “poor”.
- 3.2. Location, space size, layout and access are significant issues across all areas of the school. This is due to the needs of the school changing since it moved into the building. Additional support needs of pupils are now more severe. The number of pupils has increased significantly too. Consequently, the school building is not suitable for supporting the needs of the users. Staff are meeting the needs of pupils but the building is making this more and more challenging. This has resulted in one pupil having to attend a school in another local authority.
- 3.3. A new build Lochies would enrich the educational experience of pupils by providing equality, ensuring that the needs of all Clackmannanshire pupils can be met. Retaining pupils within the Authority would reduce fees and other costs paid to other authorities associated with placing requests.
- 3.4. An outline planning application has been submitted for a housing development on the site of the former Carsebridge distillery and warehouse site which is mainly in the catchment area of Deerpark. This will mean that Deerpark will need additional accommodation. Lochies needs additional accommodation to meet the needs of its current pupils and the demand for additional spaces. Considering this and the Core Facts grades, those involved in the design team have been considering a new site for Lochies.
- 3.5. Lochies pupils currently transition to Alloa Academy EASN provision, so only new sites in the Alloa Academy catchment area were considered as potential new locations. Five sites were identified and a high-level options appraisal was undertaken to review all of them. The conclusion of the options appraisal for each of the sites was as follows:

3.5.1. Site 1 - Land on South Eastern Part of Carsebridge

- This lies between the B909 and A907 and is part of the proposed Carsebridge housing site and is in Sunnyside Primary School catchment area. It is of sufficient size to accommodate the internal and external space requirements of a new Lochies. The location is accessible and benefits from a road network with sufficient capacity.

- However, the site is not in Council ownership and the Council would have to purchase it. In evaluating LEIP bids, the Scottish Government will make an assessment as to whether any school will be completed within 5 years of approval being given. Given the potential time delay associated with acquiring a site, as well as the cost, the site is considered unsuitable.

3.5.2. **Site 2 - Land Adjacent to Park Nursery and the Bowmar Centre**

- This site is Council owned and located on open space adjacent to the Bowmar Centre and the skate park. This site is of sufficient size to accommodate the internal and external space requirements of a new Lochies.
- The area suffers from significant drainage issues and location of the school on this site would mean a significant increase in the volume of traffic coming through the housing estate and on roads which were not designed for that volume. The traffic issues deem this site unsuitable.

3.5.3. **Site 3 - Alloa Family Centre**

- Although this site is almost within the curtilage of Alloa Academy and is adjacent to the sports pitches, it is too small to accommodate the needs of Lochies and the current family centre would need to be relocated. Given this the site is unsuitable.

3.5.4. **Site 4 - Alloa Leisure Bowl**

- The site is owned by the Council and would also be of sufficient size. The site includes a railway line, which from a sensory perspective would not be advisable for children with moderate/complex needs, who can be significantly impacted by noise or varying light levels.
- The site topography and level changes does not lend itself well to an additional support needs school design. These design issues meant this site was not considered suitable.

3.5.5. **Site 5 - Alloa West, The Pavilions**

- This site is the largest of the sites considered at over 13 hectares in total. It is owned by the Council and would be of sufficient size to accommodate the internal and external space requirements of a new Lochies. Access to outdoor learning is currently a significant challenge for Lochies pupils, this site has vast potential to change this dramatically.
- The site lies on the National Cycling Route. The site is accessible and has good road networks.
- Other education facilities exist in the area including Redwell Primary School, New Struan School and Little Stars Nursery, who are one of the Council's partner nurseries. This provides opportunities for collegiate working to take place.

- The Council has recently approved locating the Wellbeing Hub on this site, which would open up potential synergies with the new Lochies during development, construction and implementation. For example, the costs of services and drainage provisions to the Alloa West site can be shared across both Wellbeing Hub and new Lochies projects, minimising costs for both projects.

3.6. High level costs for preferred option Lochies Site 5 - Alloa West, the Pavilions as outlined in the table below:

Cost Category	Option New Build Lochies - The Pavilions
GIFA (Gross Internal Floor Area)	3300m ²
Capital Costs@Q2 24	£16,660,713*
Revenue Lifecycle and Maintenance Costs	£3,246,750*
25 Year Whole life costing comparator	£19,907,463*

*These project costs will be further refined during the site feasibility study and RIBA design stages.

3.7. Capacity of New Lochies

3.7.1. The current school has a roll of 37. This is the maximum capacity based on the existing pupils needs. In previous years the school has had higher rolls (2018/19 = 41 pupils), when pupil's needs were not as severe and complex. The school has been operating at maximum capacity for the last decade. The maximum capacity being determined by the needs of the pupils. As the level of need has increased over the years and restricted the maximum capacity, it is logical to design the school capacity based on the most complex needs. Doing so provides equality and future proofs the building. As capacity has been restricted, pupils who in the past would have attended Lochies have had to be accommodated elsewhere.

3.7.2. As the new school would not be predicted to open until late 2027 and the funding from the LEIP programme is for 25 years, the new school needs to be large enough to accommodate the historically increasing number of children who will require complex needs support. Therefore, the Council are investigating building a school that can accommodate up to 54 pupils (9 classes of 6). This is based on both the fact that there is an increasing demand for places at Lochies and the experience of new builds in other local authorities is that they were full when opened, requiring expansion.

- 3.7.3. As medical advancements have improved, life expectancy for children with complex needs has in turn increased and the numbers of pupils at Lochies has increased. The needs profile for the pupils has shifted from moderate to more complex. Consequently, it is challenging for the existing building to meet Lochies pupils' needs now and is likely to become even more challenging in the future. This is the reasoning behind the future increased capacity of 54 pupils for the new Lochies.
- 3.7.4. The new school would be designed to specific area and cost metrics in addition to particular terms and conditions. All rates will be multiplied by the "like for like" pupil on a capacity basis. Consequently, further discussion with SFT would be required to explain the impact of complex needs on determining existing capacity and future proofing for increasing numbers in scale and complexity. Subsequently, the agreed capacity will impact on the funding available from LEIP funding.

3.8. Partnership Approach

- 3.8.1. Discussions have taken place with NHS Forth Valley with a view to ensuring there would be space in the new school for children to access health services that they traditionally would have had to go out of school to access leading to loss of learning time. It will also provide a better service to families as some struggle to attend wheelchair clinics. NHS Forth Valley has said that they would be able to run clinics from the school and that it would promote better multidisciplinary working. At present speech and language, physiotherapists and occupational therapists all attend Lochies on a different day/time as there is not enough space. This would allow all the therapists to work with children and staff at the same time, enhancing provision to children and families.
- 3.8.2. Discussions continue to take place with the Wellbeing Hub Programme due to the synergies between the projects and being collocated. Working collaboratively by sharing relevant information that supports both programmes. This relationship will continue to build as both programmes have cross-dependencies and linkages with one another. This will maximise opportunities for innovation and cost reduction through economies of scale.

3.9. Consultation Process

- 3.9.1. The 5 sites in the options appraisal were discussed with current Lochies parents and carers, who expressed the following views:
- Parents and carers believe that a new school is needed to provide the space to facilitate improved support mechanisms that will allow their children to develop and become more independent learners. Increasing space and improving ease of access throughout will be life-changing for so many of these children. Doing so would provide far greater outdoor

learning opportunities, further enhancing health and wellbeing of the children.

- It is the opinion of parents and carers that the school would benefit from having their own building. They think the Pavilions site will be easier to access than the current site and provide more space than currently available to them for outdoor learning.

3.9.2. As this project involves a relocation of Lochies, a formal consultation is required under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This will be undertaken by Education staff over the winter/spring 2022/23. The consultation will be overseen by Education Scotland who will prepare a report on the consultation. A copy of the report will be incorporated into the final report which will be brought back to Council for final approval.

3.9.3. In conjunction with the consultation report, a projects scoping document will be brought back to Council for final approval prior to the finalised design and build work being undertaken.

4.0 Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP)

4.1. Background

4.1.1. The LEIP programme is jointly funded by Scottish and Local Government and is designed to improve the condition of the school estate and in particular schools that are in an unsatisfactory condition as well as support sustainable estate planning with clear investment and maintenance strategies. It is likely that the next round of funding for this programme will be the final round. Clackmannanshire is one of the local authorities who have not benefited from previous phases of this programme and the Lochies project meets the required criteria, giving the Council an opportunity to submit a bid.

4.1.2. The funding model for the LEIP programme is based on the principle that Scottish Government and Local Authority funding is provided 50:50. Government funding is in the form of revenue funding over a 25 year period, subject to satisfactory achievement of the programme's outcomes.

4.1.3. The deadline for applying for Phase 3 of the LEIP programme is the end of October and officers have been developing a bid during the summer based on the replacement for Lochies at the Pavilions site.

4.2. Sustainability Implications

4.2.1. A condition of the LEIP funding is that all projects must have zero emissions heating, include electric vehicle charging infrastructure and have an embodied carbon target. It should be noted these can be achieved for new build options identified in earlier sections. These will contribute to the Council's climate change agenda.

4.3. Resource Implications - Financial Details

4.3.1. The work to undertake a project brief for a new Lochies can be funded from the Capital Budget for the Learning Estate that was approved as part of the Council's budget setting in March 2022.

4.3.2. If a LEIP bid is successful the funding would be paid as a revenue grant after the school was operational and would be subject to the Council achieving previously agreed operating targets.

4.3.3. The LEIPs bid funding is based on the funding outcomes listed below, which cover the terms and conditions that the Council will need to evidence to SFT throughout the 25 year funding period:

- Condition
- Energy Efficiency
- Digital Connectivity
- Economic Growth
- Embodied Carbon.

5.0 Deerpark Primary School

5.1. Deerpark is part of the next options appraisal package. A report will be brought back to a future Council meeting to enable the Council to consider the options.

6.0 St Mungo's Primary School

6.1. St Mungo's is part of the next options appraisal package. A report will be brought back to a future Council meeting to enable the Council to consider the options.

7.0 Exempt Reports

7.1. Is this report exempt? Yes (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

8.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box)

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all

Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life

Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential

Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

9.0 Equalities Impact

9.1. Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes No

10.0 Legality

10.1. It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers.

Yes No

11.0 Appendices

None.

12.0 Background Papers

12.1. Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

- Clackmannanshire Council, 10 February 2022, Learning Estate Update
- Clackmannanshire Council, 19 December 2019, Learning Estate Strategy 2019 - 2040

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