

**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES SCHOOL ESTATES SUB-COMMITTEE  
ON 31 OCTOBER 2006**

**SUBJECT: STRATEGY FOR REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL ESTATE -  
PROCEDURE FOR A FIRST STAGE REVIEW**

**BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To alert members to the process which will be followed during a first stage review
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section A Paragraph 37 of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to reviewing the Councils policies and practices in relation to asset management.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Members consider the process which it is proposed be followed during a first stage review, and**
- 2.2 **consider whether there are any other issues or amendments to the process which the Sub Committee considers appropriate**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council has agreed a strategy to meet its statutory responsibility to review the school estate.
- 3.2 It has been agreed that in terms of school reviews :-
  - the Council's primary efforts will be directed towards encouraging the long term viability of individual schools
  - a two stage review process will be followed which will both meet the Council's obligation to obtain best value and provide a transparent process for the review of the future of individual schools in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in the community
- 3.3 It has been recognised that the Council has to balance its legal duty to deliver best value with both the educational and financial consequences of operating

with excess capacity, and the implications for the community in reducing that capacity.

- 3.4 The establishment of a two stage review process was intended to be a positive means of addressing the over capacity issue. The process will provide an opportunity at an early stage to identify possible alternative uses for excess capacity and/or other factors which might ensure the future of a school.
- 3.5 The outcomes of the first stage review will be presented to the Educational Services Committee and only in the situation where this is unsuccessful will a second stage review be carried out. Even then, the council has recognised that it will be necessary to balance the educational case with the wider benefits to a community of retaining a local school.
- 3.6 Appendix 1 outlines the process which will be followed in the course of a first stage review and provides Members with an opportunity to comment on the process before reviews commence.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan**

The Council's corporate plan 2004 – 2007 identifies improving attainment and achievement in Educational Services as a priority. The Educational Programme also includes a commitment to develop and implement improvements to the School Estate.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

The Council has a legal duty to secure best value and ensure that Council assets are being used efficiently.

**(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

There are no significant implications arising from reviewing the process which will be followed. Dependent upon the outcome of reviews of the school estate there may be wide ranging implications for the Council and the community.

**(d) Consultations**

Educational Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. It is important that Members have an opportunity to review the process before reviews commence.

**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Council has agreed a strategy to meet its statutory responsibility to review the school estate. This paper provides Members with an opportunity to comment on the proposed process before reviews commence.**

Author of Report:  
Background Papers:  
Ref:

**APPENDIX 1****STRATEGY FOR REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL ESTATE****PROCEDURE FOR A FIRST STAGE REVIEW**

The first stage in the strategy will be aimed at tackling the issue of excess capacity and thereby encouraging the viability of individual schools, and only where this is unsuccessful is a second stage review to be carried out. Even then, it is recognised that it will be necessary to balance the educational case with the wider benefits to a community of retaining a local school.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS**

When it is identified that a school roll has dropped to 60% of its working capacity a first stage review will be carried out. In the course of this review, Educational Services will :-

**STEP 1**

1. Prepare a report on the roll of the school in question detailing
  - Actual occupancy rate
  - Forecast trend in school roll
  - Background issues such as the type of alternative uses that Educational Services would see as compatible with the activities of the school.
  
2. Circulate a letter / information pack to local stakeholders:-
  - all elected Members
  - the School Board and parents
  - The Head Teacher and staff
  - MP
  - MSPs (including list members)
  - The Community Council
  - The Local Neighbourhood Forum
  - Other interested parties e.g. groups who expressed an interest in the course of the last consultation exercise
  - The media

identifying that a review is underway and enclosing a copy of the report at 1 above. This should also emphasise that the first stage review is aimed at encouraging the viability of individual schools.

The letter would also canvas the views of local stakeholders in order to identify any issues which would have a material impact on the school's future roll and to seek local views on how the excess capacity issue might be tackled.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **STEP 2**

3. Circulate a memo to all Council Departments seeking expressions of interest in using the excess capacity. This would be on the basis that departments would share the running costs of the accommodation.
4. Similarly, circulate a letter to community planning partners in Moray seeking expressions of interest for use of the surplus accommodation and also seeking to identify any other issues which would have a material impact on an individual school's roll. The partners are :-
  - Grampian Police
  - Grampian Fire and Rescue Service
  - Grampian Health Service
  - HIE Moray
  - Moray College
  - MVS0
5. Write to Director of Environmental Services seeking a report on future housing developments in the school catchment area and the likely impact on the school's roll.
6. Write to the base commanders at RAF Kinloss and Lossiemouth to establish whether their development plans will impact upon the roll of the school in question.
7. Write to the Enterprise Company – HIE Moray to establish whether their future plans will impact upon the school's roll.

### **STEP 3**

8. Meet with local stakeholders to consider the outcomes of the consultation exercise and identify the issues which will be reported to Educational services Committee.
9. Prepare a report on the outcome of the consultations for Educational Services Committee identifying the outcome of the first stage review. Where the review has been successful and a strategy has been identified to address the capacity issue then this should be submitted for approval by the Committee. Where the review has been unsuccessful then it should be identified that a second stage review will be undertaken.
10. A copy of the report to Educational Services Committee should be circulated to local stakeholders when Committee agenda papers are issued.