

School's Estate Strategy, September 2009

Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future

Scottish Government, September 2009

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In September 2009 the Scottish Government published a school's estate strategy document relating to use and development of all schools, new-build and old. The document discusses such things as improving the physical environment inside and out, and maximising usage of premises by the community as a whole and not just the school community. Whilst out of school care is not explicitly mentioned, the inclusion of out of school care services within school is implicit throughout the entire document.

SOSCN has extracted passages with the greatest relevance supporting the inclusion and location of out of school care services within schools; we have highlighted the most relevant passages in bold.

1. Forward

"Schools, as learning environments which embody a learning-centred philosophy for both pupils and adult learners, are crucial to achieving these fundamental objectives. **They are much more though than just 'educational establishments'. The availability and accessibility of school buildings and facilities for community use – be it educational, recreational, sporting, cultural, social or other – are equally important.**" (p2)

"The Strategy is relevant to all aspects of the school estate – new buildings and improvement of existing ones." (p3)

2. Executive Summary

"The Strategy is relevant to all parts of the school learning environment – the buildings and spaces, the grounds, the fixtures and facilities, even the furniture – and to all schools, not just those being replaced or refurbished. It is focused firmly on those who benefit from improvements to the estate – the pupils, the staff, the parents and the wider community." (p6)

"Vision statement:

Our vision is for schools which signal the high value we place on learning; which people and communities can enjoy using and can be proud; which are well designed, maintained and managed and which encourage continuous engagement with learning; which are far more than just 'educational establishments' whose quality of environment supports an accessible range of services and opportunities and which enrich the communities they serve and the lives of learners and families." (p8)

"Aspirations for the schools estate:

All children and young people will be educated in, and community users will use, schools that are 'fit for purpose' in terms of condition, suitability and sufficiency."(p9)

"Schools are integral parts of the communities they serve, with pupils making use of community facilities and communities accessing school facilities;" (p9)

"Schools accommodate and provide a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to people's health and well being, to sustaining economic growth and to the strength and vibrancy of communities;" (p9)

"A school estate which is flexible and responsive – both to changes in demand for school places and to learners' and teachers' requirements and wishes, and where the beneficial impact of change is maximised by thorough consultation and engagement with users and stakeholders." (p9)

Guiding principles and objectives for future planning and action:

"1) Good consultation means better outcomes – engaging with, consulting and involving all the potential users and interests helps to highlight expectations, identify the options and refine the objectives." (p10)

"5) More 'suitable' and 'inclusive' schools, better future-proofed for flexibility and adaptability – schools should be fit for purpose: the design and layout should enhance their function and use; they should be 'inclusive' and accessible to those with disabilities; and they need to be able to 'flex' in response to future changes in the scale and nature of demand and usage, ICT and other technology and the changing ways in which education may be delivered." (p10)

"7) A well-managed school estate which represents and delivers best value – it is to the collective benefit of everyone – learners, teachers, parents and taxpayers – and of every community, if the school estate is efficiently and effectively managed." (p10)

"9) Schools which best serve their communities – close engagement with communities and community interests and partners will better identify local needs and wishes and result in schools which offer a wider and more accessible range of public services, opportunities and facilities to complement those available elsewhere in the community." (p10)

3. Section 2 - What is the school's estate?

"The School's Wider Network

Looking outwards, the extensive network of linkages, movements and activity generated by each school is another important aspect of its dynamics. The daily pattern of home to school travel on the part of pupils, staff and community users of school facilities is the most visible manifestation of this and reaches into every community in the land. **In the 'opposite' direction pupils will, during the course of the school day, also be accessing local community facilities. Movements vary according to the time of day – breakfast clubs, the 'school day' itself, often linking directly into after-school activities and care, evening and weekend usage – and also to the time of year. Schools are significant generators of traffic, have a real environmental and local economic impact and are often hubs of social and**

community activity too. Understanding these networks and how they link to the various school functions and activities is crucial to successful design, planning and management. In turn that will help to establish a school estate that meets demands and expectations in a sustainable way and maximises the value of the assets and investment.” (p21)

4. Section 3 - Changing Contexts

“A high quality school estate helps to make Scotland...

Smarter – by supporting the quality and range of lifelong learning opportunities on offer for people of all ages: from pre-school right through adulthood;” (p24)

“Local authorities will be looking to align the aspirations and principles set out in this Strategy with their own views of local needs and priorities and their own approaches to fulfilling their statutory duties and responsibilities. These include achieving best value in the use of resources, working with other public services on a shared services agenda, delivering sufficient education accommodation and provision efficiently, **ensuring wide engagement with communities in planning and developing schools (as with other services) and ensuring inclusion, accessibility and equality of opportunity for individuals and groups within those communities.**” (p25)

Wider Policy Context

“The Scottish Government and local authorities have together set out a comprehensive approach to tackling inequalities in our society in three inter-linked policy frameworks.

The *Early Years Framework* addresses the provision of services and support to children and families whilst *Equally Well* and *Achieving our Potential* address health inequalities and poverty respectively. The *School Estate Strategy* also focuses on outcomes for people – buildings which provide or through which are provided the right range of services to people and communities, both directly and indirectly.

The Strategy’s objectives are entirely consistent with and supportive of those of the three frameworks. All public services – whether delivered by local government, the NHS or the voluntary and private sectors – need to combine in pursuit of this common goal of improving outcomes. In some circumstances schools will facilitate the integration of services physically; in others, schools may provide an appropriate local venue for services which address people’s needs and wishes, support and improve their skills and above all enable them to help themselves. The design, public ‘face’ and perception of the school needs to be of a safe, welcoming and supportive environment if these common objectives are to be achieved.” (p26)

“It is an increasing priority too to ensure that schools are genuinely a community resource, a hub and focus for community life and activity. They should be providing accessible resources and facilities that complement those nearby and which meet the learning, leisure and social needs of the wider community, in ways that enrich those communities and help them to be viable and to flourish. This will be facilitated, where appropriate, by schools including scope for the provision of childcare for pre-5s as well as for pre-school education, in an integrated way which better meets the

needs of families. Advice and support services for parents could also be located in schools thereby reducing the risk of stigmatising such services and underlining the contribution of schools to the social and learning needs of the communities they serve." (p27)

5. Section 5 – Guiding principles and objectives

"9 – Schools which best serve their communities

Schools are major public and community assets. School estate management planning needs to be better integrated into wider council asset management planning and the full range of community planning processes. This should include building effective links with local community regeneration strategies. A school can be a real catalyst in tackling high levels of deprivation in both urban and rural areas and in stabilising and helping the communities served to be viable and to flourish. Local and Scottish Government will:

- better integrate school estate management planning with wider corporate asset planning and link with the asset plans of community planning partners;
- **jointly identify the longer-term role of schools and their relationship to other local assets such as health centres, libraries, leisure and recreation centres and childcare facilities;**
- **further develop the concept of the school as a 'community hub' – where the school accommodates and supports provision of a range of community services, e.g. health, community education, sport, recreation, social and cultural activity etc;**
- **explore how best to encourage community use of both indoor and outdoor facilities within the school estate by making schools more open, accessible and welcoming at all times – to entice the community in and continue to engage with learners. Schools and local communities should be more open and accessible to each other for mutual benefit."** (p47)