

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	10 December 2019
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Completion of the Schools Modernisation Programme
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide information on the completion of the Schools' Modernisation Programme which has been achieved through the commitment of the Council and the strength of the commitment of all Council services to work together, and with partners to create a modern and vibrant school estate

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) to note that the Schools' Modernisation Programme, which began in 2004, has now officially been completed and that over 46,000 children and young people are now being taught in, and staff work in modern, innovative school buildings.

3. Background

- 3.1. In line with the principles of best value, which were first introduced into the public sector through the Local Government Act 2003, the Council embarked upon a journey to improve and invest in its school estate.
- 3.2. A long-term plan was adopted by the Council, with the vision being shared with schools and their communities, supported by significant capital and revenue funding designed to transform the whole of the school estate to provide future generations of young people with modern and safe environments they could be proud of.
- 3.3. In 2004, the Council commenced its ambitious building programme following an exercise to determine the priority of the rebuilding schedule mainly around the extent of existing buildings. Furthermore, the decision recognised the opportunity to provide better community and leisure facilities within an improved learning estate, bringing wider benefits to the entire community of South Lanarkshire.
- 3.4. This included the modernisation (refurbishment and new building) of 128 primary schools at a cost of £866 million, completed on time and in line with budget.
- 3.5. The successful completion of the Schools' Modernisation Programme is a key element in the delivery of a range of Connect objectives, including aspirations to 'ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational' and 'improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning'.

- 3.6. The modernised schools have been widely welcomed by Head Teachers, teachers and parents as 'providing a vibrant and stimulating education environment' for primary age children. (Best Value Report March 2019).
- 3.7. There is evidence that the significant investment in the school estate by the Council is having a positive impact for children, young people and local communities. The Accounts Commission also acknowledged that the Council has a strong track record of delivering large scale capital projects on time and on budget which is further evidence of the way Council services have worked together and with external providers to create what is arguably one of the largest school building projects of this kind.
- 3.8. Over 46,000 children attend nurseries and schools on any given day throughout South Lanarkshire and it is clear to see that the new school buildings are a notable feature in all of our communities and the localities of Clydesdale, East Kilbride, Hamilton, Rutherglen/Cambuslang.
- 3.9. There is no doubt that young people take pride in their school buildings as do our teachers and support staff, who work in modern and vibrant environments which have been designed to more readily deliver a 'curriculum for excellence' and to help achieve better outcomes for all learners.

4. The Secondary School Estate

- 4.1. The secondary school estate was delivered through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement with 19 new school buildings being created and completed in 2009.
- 4.2. The pride and ownership of the new school buildings by learners and staff should not be under estimated as it generates an ethos of feeling valued and on the importance of investing for future generations of learners who will go to develop their knowledge, skills for life and work.

5. The Primary Schools' Modernisation Programme

- 5.1. The schools' modernisation programme is a testament to the vision of the Council to invest in its school estate and on what can be achieved through both corporate and partnership working and liaison with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Futures Trust, to ensure the 'Schools for the Future' objectives were being met.
- 5.2. The first primary school to be modernised was Our Lady of Lourdes in East Kilbride, which opened in 2004 and was funded through a 20 year lease agreement. Thereafter, the Council committed to a capital funding programme which would secure adequate funding to undertake an entire schools' modernisation programme.
- 5.3. Buildings were designed and constructed using a mixture of external contractors and the Council's own Building Services. The second new school building to open was St John the Baptist in Uddingston.
- 5.4. New school buildings were constructed at an average rate of 9 per year with 25% of them delivered by Building Services and the rest via a number of external contractors including Carillion, Keir, Bovis Lend Lease and Morrison Construction.

- 5.5. In conjunction with the architects, Head Teachers, teachers, pupils and parents played a key part in shaping and influencing aspects of the design, creating elements of uniqueness which reflected, in many instances, aspects that mattered to the community the school/nursery it serves. This included for example, historical artefacts, stain glass windows, art work, the retention of old records and things from the past.
- 5.6. As time progressed, designs changed as the curriculum demands changed e.g. there was less need for traditional ICT suites when ICT became more embedded into classroom learning.
- 5.7. Along the way, there were also some changes to the original programme usually following further dialogue with local communities and elected members with the voice of learners featuring, wherever possible. Whilst taking account of the many views that were expressed during the journey, the focus remained on delivering on the milestones of creating new locally based schools in communities; adapting to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable children which was a priority and adapting to change were a key feature.
- 5.8. No longer, as was the case prior to the build of new schools, is there a requirement to close schools for property related matters and when you travel to any community in South Lanarkshire you can see that the Council has invested well in its school estate. It is evident that a high value has been placed on the commitment to deliver on providing a high quality education estate for the benefit of learners of all ages in local communities.
- 5.9. After consultation, schools such as Underbank and Walston, were relocated. Walston Primary was also renamed Black Mount Primary School. (Opened in August 2019). Two new additional primary schools, Park View and Newton Farm opened as a result of housing development. The last stand alone early years' establishment, the Early Learning Unit in Hamilton, which caters for some of our most vulnerable children, opened in October 2019. In addition to nursery classes within primary schools, there was an added commitment to also undertake new builds of the stand alone early years' establishments.
- 5.10. This programme has been the largest in the UK, if not Europe and one which the Council steadfastly remained committed to regardless of financial challenges arising during the 15 years of implementation.

6. Beyond the completion of the Programme

- 6.1. Some of the buildings are now approaching 15 years old and are being maintained under Housing and Technical Resources' planned maintenance programme.
- 6.2. In addition to this, the Scottish Government recently launched their Learning Estate Strategy, including the creation of a fund to recognise the financial commitment needed to maintain the condition of Scotland's school estate and assist with future developmental changes and population growth.

- 6.3. School life continues to change and the buildings must, therefore, continue to be adaptable, for example:
- ◆ a programme of upgrade of MUGA pitches to synthetic surface
 - ◆ adaptations to allow for pupil growth and changes in the Inclusion agenda
 - ◆ expansion of nursery class provision to accommodate the 1140 hours of early learning and childcare from August 2020.
 - ◆ expansion to school accommodation to meet pupil growth including e.g. the intention to build a new primary school at Jackton.

7. What has been achieved?

- 7.1. The overall achievement of the programme can be summarised as follows:

- ◆ 128 new primary schools, including 4 ASN schools and one gaelic unit
- ◆ 62 nursery classes within the primary school builds
- ◆ 16 ASN units within the primary school builds
- ◆ 15 community rooms or wings within the primary school builds
- ◆ 12 new stand alone early years establishments
- ◆ 1 community asset transfer currently underway

- 7.2. The completion of the programme means that South Lanarkshire's 46,000 children and young people are now all being taught within a modernised education estate, enhancing the learning and teaching experience and therefore the opportunity to achieve maximum educational benefit for our pupils.

8. Employee Implications

- 8.1. The programme was delivered by the Schools' Modernisation Team within Education Resources, in conjunction with numerous Housing and Technical Resources colleagues and valuable input from other Council Resources.
- 8.2. In addition, the programme was supported by various other colleagues from across the Council, including Planning and Building Control, Roads, Finance and Legal.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. The total cost of rebuilding/refurbishing all 128 primary schools and 12 standalone nurseries was £866m.
- 9.2. Housing developer contributions amounting to £11m (1.3%) of the total programme are due to the Council, primarily connected to the new schools.
- 9.3. The remaining £811m of funding, equating to 94% of the total programme cost, was provided by the Council. Over the last 15 years the Council has remained committed to the programme by continuing to allocate grant funding via a share of the General Capital Grant, and also by borrowing, with the additional loan charges incurred being built into the Council's budget strategy.

10. Other Implications (Including Environmental and Risk Issues)

- 10.1. There are no significant risk implications in terms of the information contained within this report.
- 10.2. There are no implications for sustainability in terms of the information contained within this report. The schools modernisation programme also assists with the Fairer Scotland agenda.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.
- 11.2. There is also no requirement to undertake any consultation in terms of the information contained in the report, however, during the life of the programme there was a commitment to engage with parents, families, local councillors, trades unions, a whole range of other stakeholders and any statutory consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

15 November 2019

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Lynn Sherry, Head of Education (Support Services and School Estate)

Ext: 5620 (Tel: 01698 455620)

E-mail: lynn.sherry@southlanarkshire.gov.uk