

# Primary School Estate Rising Rolls: Implications for 2013/14 Session

---

## Education, Children and Families Committee

9 October 2012

### 1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report sets out the context describing rising primary rolls in the primary sector, and identifies the anticipated need for accommodation solutions for five primary schools for the 2013/14 academic session.

### 2 Summary

- 2.1 Primary school rolls in the Council area are projected to increase by 20% in the period to 2019. This report sets out the predicted impact on the primary school estate. It considers historical patterns in school rolls and future school roll projections at a citywide level. It focuses on addressing the pressure expected in some schools at the P1 stage in meeting catchment demand.
- 2.2 There remain 4,700 spare places in the primary estate, however these are not necessarily in the right locations of the city to address rising demand. The report concludes that there is limited opportunity through catchment review to address schools facing accommodation pressure as a result of this projected rise. The proposed solution is to build new accommodation at popular schools to meet their anticipated catchment demand. Five schools are identified as potentially requiring additional accommodation for 2013. The report identifies the proposed method of delivering this additional accommodation in time for the 2013/14 start of session.

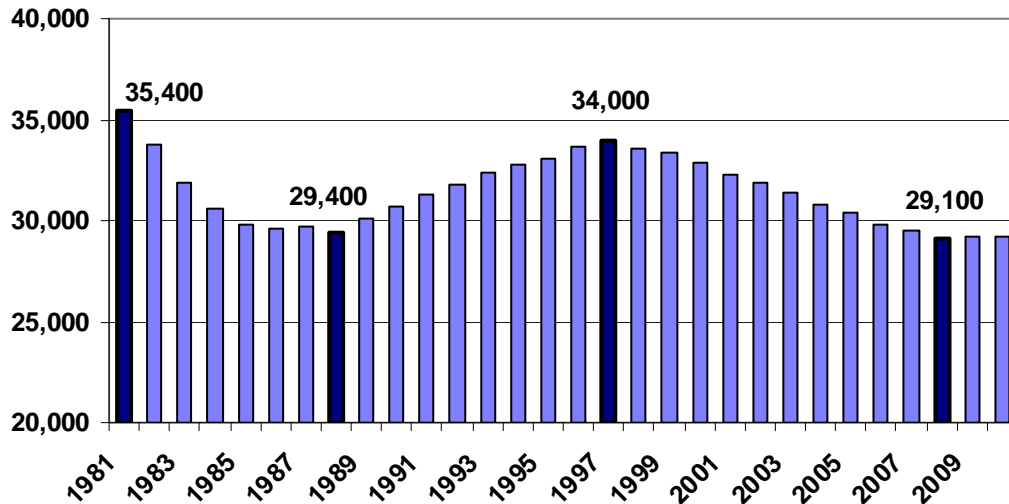
### 3 Main Report

#### Historical Trends and Primary School Roll Projections

##### Population Aged 5-11 and School Rolls

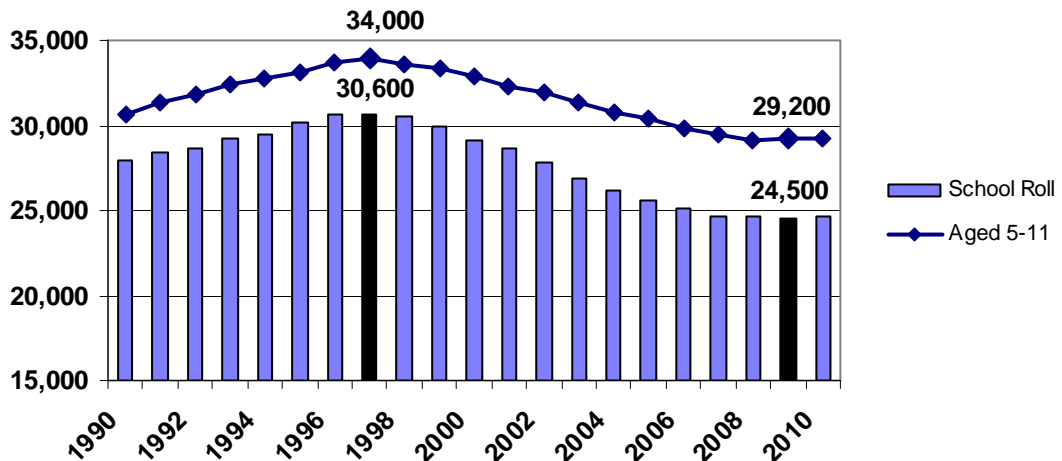
- 3.1 Since 1981 the primary school age population in Edinburgh has followed a wave pattern of peaks and troughs (see Figure 1). The pattern is broadly a 20 year cycle of falling and rising numbers from some 29,000 to around 35,000. This pattern possibly dates back to the post war baby boom, with subsequent generations perpetuating the wave pattern.

Figure 1: Population Aged 5-11 in the City of Edinburgh (1981-2010)



3.2 There is a correlation between the population aged 5-11 and primary school rolls and Figure 2 shows this relationship over a 20 year period from 1990 to 2010. From a peak of 30,600 in 1998, pupil numbers have fallen by 6,000 to a low of 24,500 in 2009.

Figure 2: Population Aged 5-11 and Primary School Rolls 1990-2010

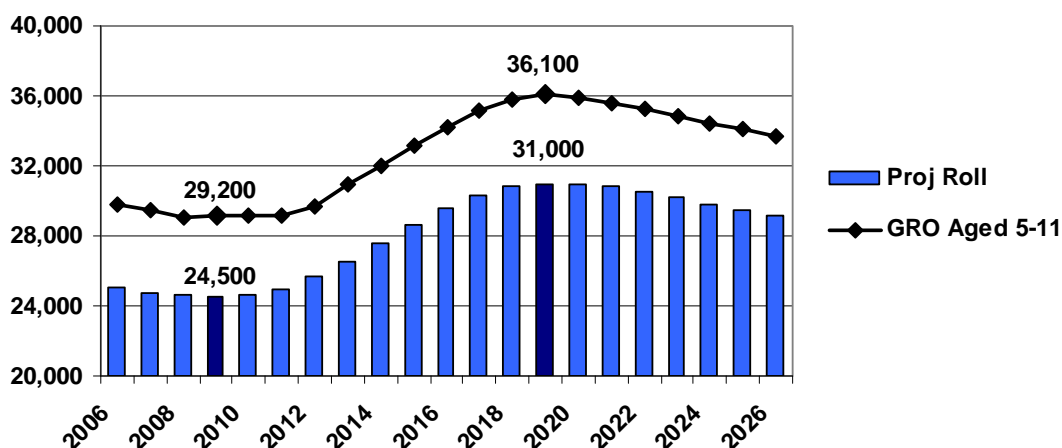


3.3 The gap between the population aged 5-11 and the roll at local authority schools is largely attributable to the independent sector in the city which provides education for around 4,000 primary school pupils. After making allowances for a net gain of some 10% from neighbouring council areas, it is estimated that currently some 3,600 primary age pupils from within the Edinburgh Council area attend independent schools.

### Population Projections and Predicted School Rolls

- 3.4 The projected population aged 5-11 and predicted city wide school rolls shows a continuation of this wave pattern. From a low of 24,500 pupils in 2009/10 the school roll rose to 25,000 for 2011/12, and a provisional roll of 25,847 for 2012/13. The school roll is now projected to increase by a further 5,200 pupils (20%) by 2019.
- 3.5 A number of data sources have been analysed in assessing the school roll projections:
- Actual births to 2011, informing the resulting P1 cohort five years later;
  - The 2008 based General Register Office of Scotland (GROS) population projections; and
  - the National Records for Scotland 2010 based projections (released in February 2012).
- 3.6 The actual number of births demonstrates a tailing off in the size of the increase which indicates that the number of births is expected to have plateaued in 2011. The 2010 projections show the primary school age population continuing to rise beyond 2019 which is inconsistent with the plateau in actual births, and is likely to overestimate the increase. The 2008 based GROS projections have undercounted the number of births in recent years. Accordingly a hybrid projection model has been developed using actual births as far as possible, and then reverting to the 2008 projections beyond this period, adjusted to take account of the undercount. The results of this hybrid projection are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Projected Population Aged 5-11 and Projected Primary School Rolls



Note 1: Population estimates to 2010 and projections thereafter

Note 2: Actual School Roll data to 2011 and projections thereafter

### Population and Births in the City Council Area

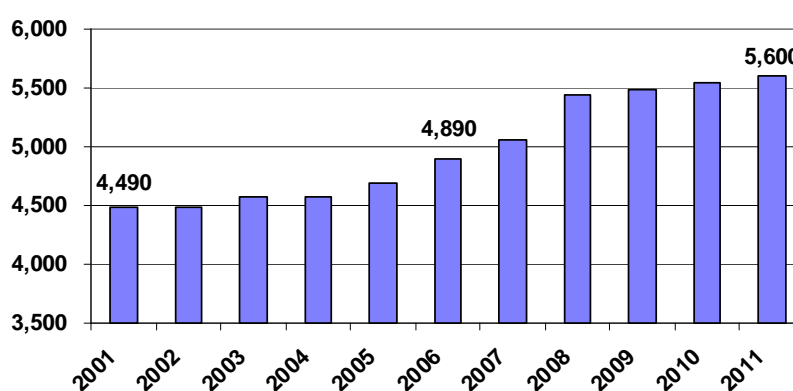
- 3.7 The population of the City of Edinburgh has risen over the last 10 years from under 450,000 to 478,000 and is projected to rise to over 500,000 well before 2020. Inward migration is identified as the key factor driving the total

population increase of Edinburgh. Births are the key component driving the numbers of primary and early years aged children although migration affects roll numbers in two ways:

- Families with children moving into the city; and
- Migrants moving to Edinburgh that thereafter start families.

3.8 Births for 2010 and 2011 are the highest for 20 years (over 5,500 per annum) and will feed through to the primary schools in 2015 and 2016. Figure 4 shows a 25% increase in the number of births over the last 10 years from 2001 to 2011. While the data suggests that births have peaked or are close to peaking, numbers remain high so, even with a gradual drop, will still result in high primary rolls in the period to 2020 and beyond.

**Figure 4: No of Births in the City of Edinburgh (1991-2001)**



## Capacity in the Primary School Estate

### Notional Capacity

3.9 Over the last year all primary schools have been visited to update capacity information. Based on the current capacity methodology (dating from the mid 1990s, based on teaching allocations to number of pupils), which is subject to review, there are around 31,500 spaces in the primary school estate. With a provisional 2012 school roll of 25,901<sup>1</sup> this gives an occupancy rate of 82% with around 5,600 spare places.

### P1 Intake

3.10 The area of greatest pressure in the primary school estate is the P1 intake stage. There is a pattern of pupils starting at local authority schools then changing to independent schools in subsequent years, mainly between P5 and P7. The result is that there is a city wide drop in pupil numbers of 9% as the same cohort moves from P1 to P7. This inevitably introduces space capacity in the upper year stages which cannot be utilised. The greatest capacity is actually required at the early stages, however class size limits of 25 at P1 and 30 at P2 and P3 place further restrictions on the estate's capacity to accommodate pupils.

<sup>1</sup> Provisional roll of 27 September 2012, potentially subject to slight change

- 3.11 There is generally a drop in numbers between birth and the P1 intake. This percentage drop has also narrowed in recent years bringing more pupils into local authority schools. This may be due to fewer families leaving the city and/or a lower percentage of pupils attending independent schools at P1.

### **Class Organisations**

- 3.12 Experience shows that 7, 14 and 21 class organisations make by far the most efficient use of classroom space. Other class organisations may require composite classes making it difficult to create efficient class organisations that match the capacity of the school.

### **Revised Notional Capacity**

- 3.13 Taking account of the above and the emerging pressure on P1 intakes a revised methodology has been used to re-assess school capacity for the purposes of examining the estate. This methodology takes account of the restrictions outlined above and as a result reduces the capacity in the school estate by approximately 1,000 places. It is however likely to be more accurate in predicting when additional classes will be required than the current methodology. The change gives a revised working capacity of around 30,600 places resulting in around 4,700 current spare places and an occupancy rate of 85%.

### **Placing Requests**

- 3.14 The city is characterised by very high levels of placing requests with many pupils attending non-catchment schools. This makes it very difficult to forecast rolls for individual schools. At some schools, placing requests will fill any spare places that are available after catchment pupils have been accommodated. Other schools will lose a substantial element of their catchment population to schools elsewhere in the estate, with pupils moving in complex patterns across the city. Even with the number of non-catchment places available falling in recent years, in 2011 still 26% of the primary pupils did not attend their catchment school.

### **Population Change within the City of Edinburgh**

- 3.15 With school rolls predicted to reach 31,000 by 2019 this indicates a need to provide extra capacity in the school estate to cater for areas where capacity is already constrained, where new housing is planned, in areas of high births or areas of high inward migration. A number of factors have been taken into account when considering projected rolls at local level, which are set out below.

### **Births and Migration**

- 3.16 Information is held on births by school catchment and this is an indicator of emerging demand at P1 although at local level there is significant inconsistency between births and catchment intakes. Many of the high birth areas tend to be traditional inner city areas with high transient populations and births tends to exceed pupil numbers that actually start at the catchment primary school so there is movement to other parts of the city or out of the city.
- 3.17 Over the last ten years housing development in the city has focussed on regenerating the older urban areas and over 17,000 dwellings have been completed. This may be bringing higher pupil generation in areas where substantial development has taken place.

- 3.18 In the more suburban areas of the city it is migrational factors allied to births that are bringing pressure on the school estate. In these areas the P1 intakes tend to exceed the number of births that occurred in the local area five years prior. The migration of families from the inner city is likely to account for this pattern.
- 3.19 The variations between catchments, the influence of placing requests and pupil flows in the city and the influence of the independent sector makes it difficult to predict changes in catchment population for individual schools. It is extremely difficult to predict instances where there may be localised spikes of population increase, or indeed drops in population.

### **Denominational Primary Schools**

- 3.20 In the Roman Catholic sector, the city is served by 15 primary schools and in recent years many have increased their occupancy by attracting pupils from both the Roman Catholic and non-denominational sector. To manage P1 intakes, priority in these schools is now being given to baptised Roman Catholics. Given that many of their current rolls consist of around 50% non-baptised Roman Catholics, it is anticipated that there will be sufficient capacity in the estate to accommodate growth in the Roman Catholic population.

### **Rising rolls in the context of estate rationalisation**

- 3.21 The Council commenced a school closure programme in 2000 to respond to falling primary rolls. At this time there were 8,400 spare places in the primary estate. There continues to be 4,700 spare places in the primary school estate for the 2012/13 session. If no closures had taken place in the past decade, by the time the rolls had fallen to their lowest point of 24,500 in 2009, a third of the primary school estate would have been empty.
- 3.22 Between 2000 and 2010 the primary estate was reduced from 103 schools to 87. The majority of these schools were significantly under-occupied; some with rolls as small as 33 pupils. For the schools involved in the last phase of closures, occupancy rates varied between 21% and 41%.
- 3.23 This under-occupancy was a reflection of parental choice; the majority of the schools suffered from significant numbers of parents in their catchment areas making placing requests to other schools. In the last phase of closures, none of the four closing schools attracted more than 41% of their catchment population, with the majority choosing other schools.
- 3.24 Significant savings have been achieved as a result of the closures in times of financial constraint. Since the closure programme commenced in 2000, the Council has saved an estimated £24.5m in revenue costs. Between now and 2020, the Council will save a further £32m in revenue costs (expressed at current prices). This amounts to a saving of £4m per annum, and these savings, which will continue in perpetuity, have protected education services from further budget cuts.

## **Solutions to Accommodation Pressures**

### **Catchment Review**

- 3.25 While there remains a significant amount of spare capacity in the city, this spare capacity is not necessarily in the right areas of the city to help address those schools facing accommodation pressure.
- 3.26 The scale of the increase in pupil numbers and the fact that schools under pressure tend to lie adjacent to one another limits the scope for catchment reviews to resolve the accommodation pressures.
- 3.27 In terms of catering for rising rolls, catchment reviews are anticipated to offer a full solution in only one or two cases across the estate. However, more catchment reviews, combined with building works, may be necessary to deal with accommodation pressures for schools where the site is too small to expand.
- 3.28 Undertaking a catchment review is governed by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. A statutory consultation process must be followed, which takes around six months to conclude, and applies no matter what size of catchment change is proposed. In order to conclude a catchment review prior to final decisions being made on P1 placing requests each year in April, authority to consult would require to be sought from the Committee by October of the preceding year.

### **Leased Accommodation**

- 3.29 In some instances it may be appropriate to lease additional accommodation, for example where a school site is too small to install new accommodation. Properties such as church halls have provided additional accommodation for schools in the past, and still do in the case of South Morningside Primary School. Experience suggests that annexes that are not shared with other users, and are located close to the main site are preferable. While an off-site annexe is not an optimum solution, it may be preferable to other solutions for a particular school. The Department will work with individual schools and their Parent Councils to identify where such opportunities exist as an option.

### **New Accommodation**

- 3.30 It is envisaged that to provide the necessary capacity where it is needed will require a programme of building works, some allied to catchment changes. There are some schools where there is no or limited space to create extra accommodation due to a constrained site. This may require extra provision to be made at an adjacent school allied to a catchment review. In creating extra capacity at some schools, this may help address the accommodation pressures at schools in the immediate area through placing requests.
- 3.31 It is proposed that additional accommodation will be provided through new build accommodation on-site alongside the main buildings of individual schools. With the development of construction techniques in recent years, it is anticipated that the accommodation will be constructed off-site in factory conditions, and then constructed on-site in a relatively short time period (i.e. the summer holidays), to minimise disruption to the school. On site works will include the laying of foundations and the installation of services, prior to the

construction of the new accommodation. The accommodation provided will be to a high quality and specification.

- 3.32 This approach to the project also allows the Council to refine its projections of where the classrooms are needed once it has annual information on anticipated pupil numbers in January each year. Final decisions regarding which schools required the new additional accommodation could be taken after initial information on pupil numbers is known each year. This would also help mitigate the risk of any localised spikes of population, where an accommodation solution could be achieved quickly. It would also help mitigate the risk of any unnecessary expenditure by closely monitoring, and then responding to, each school's intake numbers.
- 3.33 It is anticipated that new additional accommodation will be required at some schools over a number of years. Some of this accommodation will be required for 2013. It is accordingly proposed to take a phased approach to this project, with the first phase delivering any new accommodation identified as being required for August 2013. While some schools are projected to require more than four spaces over the next five years, it is proposed that no more than two extra classrooms (plus any additional GP space) are provided at any one time. This will allow the monitoring of the school roll in forthcoming years to determine whether the full extent of the projected accommodation is required in future years, avoiding any unnecessary spend.
- 3.34 The first phase of new accommodation is anticipated as being required for August 2013 at the following five primary schools:
- Balgreen
  - Granton
  - Trinity
  - Victoria
  - Wardie
- 3.35 Initial meetings regarding the context of rising rolls have been held with the Head Teachers and Parent Councils of the five schools. The next step is to meet the schools and parent representatives on-site to discuss the detail of the locations for the new accommodation. This will be determined in part by the location of utilities and guidance from the Planning Division. Whilst the provision of additional new accommodation has been identified as the solution for each school; any alternative options identified will be fully considered.
- 3.36 Following agreement of the location of the classrooms, in tandem with the design of the buildings, the next step will be the submission of planning applications and building warrants, anticipated in December 2012. The application for planning consent would be for the full amount of accommodation that is required over the forthcoming years. These consents would then remain valid until such a time as the installation of the accommodation was deemed necessary.
- 3.37 The final decision as to whether to install accommodation at these schools will be taken in January 2013, based on an assessment of the initial pupil registration figures for August 2013. Progress on this project will be reported to



the March meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee as part of the annual reporting on P1 and S1 intakes.

- 3.38 Off-site construction would continue over the first half of 2013, with the accommodation anticipated to be built on-site over the summer holidays in 2013, ready for occupation in August for the 2013 start of session.

#### **Procurement of Accommodation**

- 3.39 It is proposed that the most efficient solution for providing additional accommodation is to have a contract with a single provider who can deliver an agreed range of additional accommodation identified as being required on a 'call off' basis over a number of years. Given the short timescales for delivery in 2013, the Council has engaged with hub South East Scotland Limited (HSESL) to reach agreement for the delivery of the first phase of accommodation, with the prospect of future phases being delivered by HSESL to be subject to further negotiation.
- 3.40 The hub South East Scotland Programme involves local public sector organisations working collaboratively and in partnership with a private sector development partner SPACE in a joint venture company, hub South East Scotland Limited. This was created to facilitate a sustained programme of enhanced local service improvements through increasing joint service working and integration between Health Boards, Local Authorities, Community Planning Partnerships and the emergency service organisations. The Council is one of the participants and partner organisations in HSESL and a number of local projects are already being delivered through this programme.
- 3.41 The alternative for delivery of future phases would be to procure a contractor through competition which would necessitate a six month procurement process advertised through the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), prior to a contractor being appointed.
- 3.42 The Children and Families Department has set up an Investment Steering Group for the duration of the project to oversee the delivery of this additional accommodation. The project will operate on the project management principles of 'Prince 2', and will follow the same governance structure as all other Council major projects including the delivery of new schools.

#### **Estate Forum**

- 3.43 A cross party Forum on Children and Families Estate Evaluation has been established to consider estate issues such as these. The Forum has met three times since August, and has considered the content of this report. The Forum has focussed on a number of issues, including:
- City wide primary aged pupil projections;
  - Reviewing general purpose space;
  - Ensuring sufficient levels of support space such as gym, dining and playground space;
  - The use of annexe accommodation;
  - The possibilities offered by catchment review;

- Utilising other schools' accommodation including secondary schools and under occupied primary schools;
- Utilising former school buildings;
- Addressing accommodation pressure on a cluster basis;
- Changing perceptions of school; and
- Creating the most efficient school organisations.

#### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 An affordability cap of £2,200 per square metre has been agreed for the new accommodation to be provided by HSESL. This translates to a total affordability cap of £2.614m for the 2013 phase. This is a maximum cap and it is hoped that this cost is bettered as the project is developed in detail.
- 4.2 The provision of a classroom of 60 square meters necessitates on average around a further 27 square meters of support space (cloakrooms, toilets, etc.). Accordingly the provision of each classroom is expected to cost around £191,000. Each of the five schools are proposed to have an additional two classrooms built for 2013, plus any necessary general purpose space provision.
- 4.3 There is provision within the Children and Families Capital Investment Programme for any capital funding required to respond to the challenges arising from rising primary school rolls. There is a schools fund allocation of £7.08m over the period 2012–2016 which has been designated for this purpose and which will cover the immediate requirements for 2013 with the balance being required for future phases.
- 4.4 Committee should note that there will be an ongoing requirement for additional accommodation over the next five years.

#### **5 Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 By offering additional capacity at local schools the Council is responding to parental choice and endeavouring to offer all catchment pupils from all equalities groups the opportunity to attend their catchment school. The Council will continue to ensure that the needs of pupils who have a disability are met by the accommodation available at the schools affected by these proposals. The provision of facilities offered to school users with learning and behavioural support needs will be unaffected. Accordingly, these proposals have no significant impact on any equalities groups and provide greater opportunities for catchment pupils to attend their catchment school. For these reasons, the overall equalities relevance score is 1 (out of a possible 9) and a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

#### **6 Environmental Impact**

- 6.1 This project would see the addition of new classrooms across the city. The purpose of the project is to create additional accommodation at local schools so

that children can access their catchment school. Accordingly it should ensure that travel to school patterns are minimised.

## **7 Conclusions**

- 7.1 Primary school rolls are expected to increase across the city between now and 2019; rolls have been increasing since 2009. Catchment numbers at a number of schools are expected to exceed capacity in forthcoming years.
- 7.2 While spare places continue to exist in the city, these are not in the right places to address the schools under accommodation pressure. Accordingly it is expected that new build accommodation to increase the number of classrooms will be required over the next five years at a number of schools.
- 7.3 It is expected that new build solutions for five schools will be required as a first phase for delivery prior to the start of the 2013/14 start of session. It is proposed that a final check point on the delivery of this accommodation is made in January 2013, when initial pupil registration figures for August 2013 are known.

## **8 Recommendations**

- 8.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- a) Notes the content of this report;
  - b) Approves that new accommodation is provided at the following primary schools, subject to a final decision regarding the necessity for such provision, delegated to the Director of Children and Families, being taken in January 2013 upon assessment of pupil registration figures:
    - Balgreen
    - Granton
    - Trinity
    - Victoria
    - Wardie
  - c) Approves that further long term policy development regarding the estate is considered by the sub committee of the Education, Children and Families Committee proposed under the new committee structure. This will address the issues identified at paragraph 3.43 in this report.
  - d) Note that the principles outlined in this report will apply to future schools identified as requiring accommodation solutions in future years.

**Gillian Tee**  
Director of Children and Families

---

Appendices	None
Contact/tel/Email	Lindsay Glasgow <a href="mailto:lindsay.glasgow@edinburgh.gov.uk">lindsay.glasgow@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>
Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	Supports National Outcome 4 – ‘Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.’
Background Papers	None