

# Education, Children and Families Committee

10:00, Tuesday, 12 October 2021

## Learning Estate Strategy – Guiding Principles

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive all
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### 1. Recommendations

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1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:

- 1.1.1 Approve the ***Edinburgh's Learning Estate Strategy 2021: Investing in New Buildings: Guiding Principles*** document included in appendix 1 of this report.

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## Learning Estate Strategy – Guiding Principles

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report outlines the key aspects of ***Edinburgh’s Learning Estate Strategy 2021: Investing in New Buildings: Guiding Principles***.
- 2.2 There is a significant planned investment in the learning estate included in the Council’s 10-year Capital Investment Programme. The learning estate strategy has been created to act as strategic guidance for learning estate investment projects.
- 2.3 Investment in the learning estate is essential to achieve the priorities in the Council Business Plan.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 In September 2019 the Scottish Government published Scotland’s Learning Estate Strategy: Connecting People, Places and Learning. This document provided guidelines for investment in the learning estate and outlines the criteria to be used by all the projects in the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP).
- 3.2 The Council has three projects which are part of the LEIP - the replacement projects for Currie High School, Liberton High School and phase 2 of Wester Hailes High School. These projects are part of the Wave 4 learning estate investment programme which also includes committed investment in Castlebrae and Trinity Academy.
- 3.3 The Council’s 10-year Capital Investment Programme also includes significant investment in new early years, primary and secondary learning estate infrastructure aligned to the growth of the city outlined in the development plans (LDP and City Plan 2030).
- 3.4 All of this investment in the learning estate has a key role to play in achieving the priorities in the Council’s Business Plan for a net zero carbon city and to provide more services locally where people require. This will also require investment across the existing learning estate to ensure buildings are energy efficient but also suitable to act as community hubs for the delivery of wider services to local people.

### 4. Main report

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- 4.1 The ***Edinburgh’s Learning Estate Strategy 2021: Investing in New Buildings: Guiding Principles*** document is attached in Appendix 1. The strategy pulls together elements of the Scottish Government’s Learning Estate Strategy and aligns them with

key aspects emerging from the Council Business Plan and the strategic framework [Edinburgh Learns for Life](#) to arrive at 5 core themes – Teaching and Learning; Sustainability; Digital; Inclusion and; Community - which will guide future investment in Edinburgh's learning estate.

- 4.2 The strategy is the starting point for briefing project teams working on the significant number of learning estate investment projects included in the Council's Capital Investment Programme. As each project is then developed more specific user and technical briefs are developed to guide the project design team.
- 4.3 A Learning Estate Investment Implementation Unit has been established with appropriate officer involvement from across the Council to ensure improvements to the learning estate meet the aspirations outlined in the Council Business Plan. The unit is aligned to the Council's corporate governance structure for teaching and learning, sustainability and 20-minute neighbourhoods to ensure opportunities for the learning estate to support improvements to increased integrated service delivery in local areas are progressed.

## 5. Next Steps

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- 5.1 The ***Edinburgh's Learning Estate Strategy 2021: Investing in New Buildings: Guiding Principles***, if approved by Committee, will be published on the Council website and used to guide future investment in the learning estate.

## 6. Financial impact

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- 6.1 There are no additional or new financial implications.

## 7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

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- 7.1 Detailed engagement with all relevant stakeholders is progressed for ever learning estate investment project.

## 8. Appendices

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 - ***Edinburgh's Learning Estate Strategy 2021: Investing in New Buildings: Guiding Principles***



Aerial view of proposed Maybury Primary School & Health Centre, Architype 2021

# EDINBURGH'S LEARNING ESTATE STRATEGY 2021

## Investing in New Buildings: Guiding Principles

## Introduction

### Purpose of this Document

This document sets out the principles which will guide decision making and project briefing for new investment in Edinburgh's learning estate. It will provide a high-level brief for all new learning estate buildings that will mean they are developed in line with the strategic objectives of the Council and support and facilitate the delivery of excellence in learning and teaching.

This document serves as a reference point for everyone involved in learning and teaching in Edinburgh and as a statement of intent for stakeholders involved in school and community infrastructure projects, regardless of their scale. It is a dynamic document written to encourage innovation and continual improvement in the delivery of learning and teaching and the role of schools and early years settings in their wider communities.

### Strategic Context

City of Edinburgh Council's vision is of a fairer, healthier, greener future for everyone where learning for life happens at home, in school, in the wider community and in the workplace. The [Council's Business Plan 2021](#) recognises that Edinburgh's Learning Estate is fundamental in meeting the aspirations of this vision through investment in new, modern, sustainable and inclusive schools and early years facilities. It is through this investment and the considered planning and design of the assets it creates that Edinburgh can realise the wider strategic objectives of its Business Plan.

The 10 principles in the [Scottish Government's Learning Estate Strategy](#) provides the framework around which City of Edinburgh Council's own Learning Estate Strategy is formed. These are developed further by the Council's Business Plan 2021 which set out four core principles for development of Edinburgh's school estate:

- Future schools will be truly inclusive, designed to accommodate the needs of all children irrespective of disability or additional support requirements;
- Future schools will be planned according to the principles of a '20-minute neighbourhood';
- Future schools will be constructed to Passivhaus standards;
- Future schools will be influenced by learner-led consultations.

These four principles and the strategic objectives of the Business Plan stem from the City's Edinburgh Learns for Life Strategic Framework which is used by the Council to deliver on the requirements of the National Improvement Framework. Edinburgh Learns for Life pulls together all aspects of quality assurance within education to ensure operational

alignment with these strategic objectives. The Council's Learning Estate Strategy is a key component of Edinburgh Learns for Life.

### Edinburgh Learns for Life

#### Our Vision

A fairer, healthier, greener future for everyone, where learning for life happens at home, in school, in the wider community, and in the workplace.

#### Our Mission

To create a world class learning city where everyone's skills, knowledge, creativity and relationships with people and places are equally valued. To create an environment of collaboration that inspires connections, improves wellbeing and reduces poverty.

#### Our Goals



*We will co-create the environments where learners can lead and shape their own learning.*



*We will use a place based approach to build collaborative and sustainable learning communities and networks.*



*We will provide inclusive, equitable, valuable learning opportunities for everyone.*

## Guiding Principles, Priorities and Themes

With the aim of creating an inclusive, zero-carbon world class learning city; the City of Edinburgh Council vision is for a place-based approach to learning and community infrastructure investment. The ambition is for inclusive, community lifelong learning hubs, where public services can be co-located with links to travel networks, green infrastructure and strategic public transport networks. These strategic objectives reflect the guiding principles of Scotland's National Learning Estate Strategy (below), the Council's Edinburgh Learns for Life Framework (top right) and the Council's Business Plan (right) and are represented in this Strategic Brief by 5 Core Themes.

### Scottish Government's Learning Estate Guiding Principles

- Learning environments should support and facilitate excellent joined up learning and teaching to meet the needs of all learners.
- Learning environments should support the wellbeing of all learners, meet varying needs to support inclusion and support transitions for all learners.
- The learning estate should be well-managed and maintained, making the best of existing resources, maximising occupancy and representing and delivering best value.
- The condition and suitability of learning environments should support and enhance their function.
- Learning environments should serve the wider community and where appropriate be integrated with the delivery of other public services in line with the place principle.
- Learning environments should be greener, more sustainable, allow safe and accessible routes and be digitally enabled.
- Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning environments should be maximised.
- Good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all.
- Collaboration across the learning estate, and collaboration with partners in localities, should support maximising its full potential.
- Investment in Scotland's learning estate should contribute towards improving learning outcomes and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

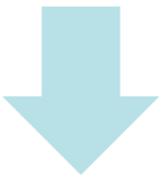


## Edinburgh Learns for Life Strategic Goals



### Edinburgh Business Plan Core Principles

- Future schools will be truly inclusive, designed to accommodate the needs of all children and young people irrespective of disability or additional support requirements.
- Future schools will be planned according to the principles of a '20-minute neighbourhood'.
- Future schools will be constructed to Passivhaus standards.
- Future schools will be influenced by learner-led consultations.



### Edinburgh Learning Estate Core Themes



- Learning spaces should be comfortable, safe and intuitive in their layout and adjacencies. They should facilitate collaborative working and play, across ages, across stages and across different users whilst also providing quiet, individual spaces.
- School grounds and nursery play areas are learning spaces and there should be strong connections and blurred boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Furniture and equipment should be agile and varied to meet the needs of different users and different ways of learning. It should be comfortable, robust and easily cleaned. It should be easily moved when it needs to be but sturdy and safe when positioned.
- Spaces should provide the best conditions for learning and teaching with lighting, heating, ventilation and acoustics optimised to provide a comfortable environment supporting positive outcomes for building users.

**All Learning and Teaching spaces, indoors and out, should be flexible to respond to the needs of all users and support changing pedagogies.**

## Teaching & Learning

- Our Learning Estate should provide inclusive environments where all learners feel safe, achieving, nurtured, responsible and included.
- We want to create a truly inclusive education system and reduce the number of special schools.
- All learning spaces should be carefully designed to meet increasingly complex and diverse learning needs.
- Every project should have learners at their heart with the UNRC rights of the child and GIRFEC at their core.

## Inclusion

**Every learner has the right to be educated in their community and, where possible, in their local school or Early Years setting. The learning estate will be designed to ensure that wherever possible, children can be educated in their local community.**

- The learning estate should provide digitally enabled environments for users, to ensure equity of opportunity. The embedding of new technology in a strategically managed approach enhances teaching and learning, supports collaboration, reduces workload, minimizes risk and increases creativity.
- Technology should support and facilitate the way in which we want teaching and learning to take place: being flexible, adaptable and inclusive, to inspire visionary, innovative and inspirational learning experiences.
- Our Learning Estate should provide an environment where the use of digital technologies enhances learning and teaching and gives learners the skills to understand, apply and create new digital solutions of their own (digital connectedness).

**Technology should be fully enabled and ubiquitous, embedded in learning, encouraging and developing shared collaborative resources to empower learners.**

## Digital

- The Learning Estate should provide an environment that weaves together global citizenship, education in sustainable development and outdoor learning as part of everyone's learning experiences.
- The Council's Learning Estate should contribute to meeting Edinburgh's net-zero carbon and sustainability objectives.

- Technical and design interventions such as Passivhaus, green roofs, water saving measures, etc. should be celebrated and be made visible as part of the design of new facilities to raise awareness and educate service users.
- A place-based approach should be taken to learning and community infrastructure investment to create lifelong learning and community hubs that provide a social focal point in their neighbourhood.
- Learning Estate projects should assess opportunities to improve links to strategic transport corridors, active travel routes and green infrastructure.

- Quality Outdoor Learning and Teaching space should be fundamental to any new design scheme which should be varied and interesting, low maintenance and accessible as a learning space for all.

- There should be a focus on sustainable food production to promote Health and Wellbeing and Enterprise as part of our service delivery.

# Applying Edinburgh's Core Themes

## Community

**Our schools should be more than a school. They should be welcoming, shared spaces for everyone, shaped by Place Principles that create, develop and contribute to communities.**

## Sustainability

**Education is the best way of encouraging global citizenship and raising awareness of environmental challenges; the Learning Estate should provide a resource that educates users and helps shape attitudes and behaviours.**

## A Curriculum for Excellence

'A Curriculum for Excellence' establishes the values, purpose and principles of education in Scotland for children and young people between the ages of 3 and 18. It is based on allowing learners to develop the following four capacities:



- **Successful learners** with enthusiasm and motivation for learning determination to reach high standards of achievement and openness to new thinking and ideas;
- **Confident individuals** with self-respect, a sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being, secure values and beliefs and ambition.
- **Responsible citizens** with respect for others and commitment to participate responsibly in political, social and cultural life.
- **Effective contributors** with an enterprising attitude, resilience and self-reliance.

The learning environments that we create should support teachers in the delivery of the curriculum and support learners in developing the 'four capacities'.

## Innovation and Change

As technological development accelerates and global and local priorities shift, education must adapt. The teaching and learning environments we design

today must be flexible and agile in the way they can be configured so that they can work effectively throughout their life.

Teaching and learning environments and the facilities and spaces that support them should provide the opportunities necessary to develop people's skills for learning, life and work.

Modern working environments and practises are increasingly open and flexible, facilitated by technology and driven by higher productivity through collaborative working and a focus on worker's health, well-being and professional and personal development.

The environments we create for our learners; the places, the schools, the classrooms and the outdoor spaces; should promote and encourage the kind of learner we will need in the workplaces of the future.



*The Digital Strategy for the learning estate will be focused on supporting the rollout of 1:1 devices for all learners allowing learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors.*



*Learning and the curriculum will also be integrated with the community; both in terms of the physical environment provided by new buildings and the partnership working made possible by the facilities and spaces offered.*

## Inspiring Achievement and Belonging

The Learning Estate should be designed as a network of community hubs offering life-long learning and engagement facilitated by the approach to its design rather than just a community programme of services and events.

The Learning Estate should motivate and inspire the aspirations, achievements and attainment of the learners who access it, through the quality of the environments created.

These environments will provide spaces to suit and support all learners, seamless digital connectivity and rich outdoor learning opportunities; learners and the wider community will feel valued and respected. In turn, they will respect, engage with and respond positively to spaces which have been designed with their needs in mind.

**"We use a wide range of learning environments and creative teaching approaches."**

*"How Good Is Our School? 4th Edition 2015; 2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment; Quality of Teaching – Level 5 illustration"*

# Teaching & Learning



**"The environments we create for our learners; the places, the schools, the classrooms and the outdoor spaces; should promote and encourage the kind of learner we will need in the workplaces of the future."**

## Optimised Environments

New schools and Early Years settings should be welcoming and inclusive for all, appearing as a natural part of their environment, inviting in learners and members of the community.

Evidence shows that the design of learning space will have an impact on a learner's progress.

Spaces should provide the best conditions for learning and teaching with lighting, heating, ventilation and acoustics optimised to provide a comfortable environment supporting positive outcomes for building users.

## Teaching & Learning Space Strategy

Every school and nursery should have a range of learning environments available. Spaces should be agile to provide teachers with the opportunities they need to support differentiation and challenge learners to progress at an appropriate pace.

Learning environments should encourage learners to lead their own learning whilst also providing the facilities to allow discussion and individual evaluation of learning.

Buildings and outdoor spaces that encourage and support efficient utilisation of spaces and facilities is key.

Users should experience an environment that works for all and achieves this by empowering users to adjust or reconfigure spaces, furnishings and equipment to support a variety of meet teaching and learning activities.

## Community Hubs

### Context and Background

A key principle of the Council's 20-minute City strategy is delivering a range of services from a single building or campus. This optimises usage and customer capture and encourages synergies and greater planned and unplanned collaboration and social interaction between different people.

By integrating a mix of programmes and services, Community Hubs encourage cross-over users and are more likely to engage first-time users in new programmes. In addition, 80% of the Council's own carbon footprint is attributable to running buildings. By joining up services and thinking differently about how we deliver services, we can make our estate more efficient and reduce the need for individual buildings which traditionally only offer a single service. This allows us to invest in our best buildings both to make them more fit for purpose and better performing from a carbon perspective, at the same time as allowing a richer mix of uses to benefit the whole community.

As the most significant public assets within many areas of the city, the learning estate will play an important part in this strategy.

### What is a Community Hub?

There is no single model for what a Community Hub should look like. The services they provide and the programmes they deliver need to be developed to meet the needs of the community they serve.

However, broadly a Community Hub may be defined as:

*A school or nursery site from which partnerships provide the mechanism and create an environment for the integrated delivery of services and activities that meet the needs of all learners and the community.*

In Community Hubs learners should be at the heart of decision making. They should benefit from the services and activities delivered while their engagement with these services and activities should contribute to community development.

The mix of services will be dependent on the needs of the local community but will be focused on life-long learning, cross-generational activities, health and well-being, social services, youth development, family support and community development.

Accordingly, a Community Hub is not a building and it is not quickly created. However, the design of our new buildings and their grounds should create the right environment and provide the flexibility to allow community partnerships of different types to thrive. This begins during the initial stakeholder engagement processes when existing and aspirational community requirements should be identified.

## A Welcoming Place

A Community Hub should be an inviting and welcoming place where all users are greeted as they enter the building and with clear signage to direct people.

Shared spaces should be easily accessed with other spaces made available out of school or nursery hours as a shared community resource or for commercial hire.

As an investment in the community we will want our Learning Estate to serve the local area well, for buildings to be used efficiently and for outdoor spaces to encourage use and development through a sense of shared ownership.

A Community Hub will provide opportunities for formal and informal social interactions amongst different people for different reasons. They will be community anchors where people can meet and socialise, thereby building community identity. Accordingly, a welcoming space that is respected and provides a sense of shared ownership and responsibility is fundamental.

### Community Design Considerations

- A good design should not involve conflict between the needs of one user over another. However, where a conflict does arise the needs of learners should be at the heart of decision making.
- School and Early Years buildings should be designed zonally with each area capable of being isolated from the others to allow greater control of access arrangements.
- New buildings should be fully accessible and inclusive for all learners, from very young children to older people. Cross-generational use should be the expectation.
- School Grounds should be a significant community resource with areas provided to encourage shared growing and planting. A zonal access arrangement may be as applicable outside as it is inside. Access to sheds for storage of equipment and resources should be considered.

# Community



"...the change required to end poverty in Edinburgh is as much about changing the day to day experiences, connections and relationships between individuals and organisations and within communities as concrete change to material circumstances."

The Edinburgh Poverty Commission report "A Just Capital – Actions to End Poverty in Edinburgh"

### A Safe Place

Community and school or Early Years setting interactions will often highlight the apparent conflict between the desire to make school or Early Years settings safe and secure places whilst also making them open and connected places for everyone.

The safety and security of our young people is a priority, but we need to do it in a way that builds bridges rather than fences.

A Community Hub should support safe spaces by encouraging passive surveillance through thoughtful design, a mixed programme of activities encouraging greater footfall; and the ethos it promotes.

A safe school or Early Years setting will instil in learners of all ages an understanding and respect of potential dangers and, where appropriate, encourage them to take greater responsibility for themselves and for others.

Community hubs need to undertake appropriate risk assessment and help all users, including children, to confront and manage risk appropriately. The safety of all users will be best ensured by the shared approaches and practises of the school or Early Years setting and service providers.

## Inclusion at the Heart

Inclusion is at the heart of City of Edinburgh Council's education policies, planning, ethos and culture. It is based around four core principles:

- Relationships
- Rights Respecting
- Resilience Building
- Restorative

Just as these principles should be visible in the service we deliver, they should be visible in the facilities we provide for our learners.

The building of any new learning and teaching spaces presents an opportunity to provide a learning environment which will more effectively meet the needs of all learners through an inclusive approach to design. Inclusion in this sense is not an 'add on' and is instead about provision of a variety of flexible and adaptable spaces that enable inclusion within the standard schedule of accommodation.

**"The school works with key partners to remove barriers to learning and provide an inclusive learning environment."**

*"How Good Is Our School? 4th Edition 2015; 2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment; Quality of Teaching – Level 5 illustration"*

The inclusion strategy for the design of a new school or Early Years setting will ensure that there are a variety of spaces to support learners needs, enhancing support throughout the curriculum, creating opportunities for different modes for learning. This means building flexibility into the design to allow spaces to be tailored to best meet the needs of their learners.

## Designing for Inclusion

The design of our learning and teaching spaces should reflect the variety of research available on inclusive design. It is important to recognise that inclusive design is not simply about access, which may focus on the needs of disabled users in particular; but is about creating spaces that meet the needs of all users. This means that designers need to have a good understanding of how people will interact with and experience that environment. This will best be achieved by involving the end users, principally children and young people, in the design process. Stakeholder engagement is considered in the sections that follow.

A few key considerations are listed below although it should be noted that these are generally for learners with autism and further research and engagement should be drawn on to meet the needs of other users.

### Acoustics and Sounds

Getting the acoustics right for teachers and learners in all areas is vital. Spaces for more traditional instruction that support verbalisation to a larger group and high levels of audibility should be identified and designed accordingly. Smaller spaces within larger open-plan spaces that support "deep learning" where learners are more likely to be speaking quietly in small groups should also be considered in acoustic design.

Removing the need for a school bell is an example of a more inclusive approach for sound sensitive users. Removing the school bell also deinstitutionalises the learning environment, enabling learners to be responsible for their time management as they will be in their working lives. It also allows a safer and staggered transition of movement between areas thereby creating a calmer environment for all, but in particular for those learners who find difficulties in managing noisy/busy spaces.

### Wayfinding

Considering how routes may be defined will be important for some learners and visitors. Signage, colour contrast, textures and finishes should be used to aid building users by providing direction, predictability and clearly defining different areas. Other sensory experiences such as smell and noise can be used to help orientate users with visual impairments.

Glazing and views between spaces (for example glazed door panels) can assist in identifying spaces or the presence of other people. Manifestations on glazed panels will be used to alert users to the presence of glazing but may also be used to bring character to learning and teaching spaces and identify particular spaces.

Wayfinding in reception areas will be critical to guide people to the location of particular facilities (such as sports hall or activity spaces) and also identify areas which may not be accessed. The reception itself should be clearly identified with building users intuitively identifying it and directed toward it upon entering the building.

Where signage is used, it should be simple, clear and at a height appropriate for all users – including those in wheelchairs – to view.

### Interior Design

A colour pallet that reflects research in inclusive design; avoiding white and over-stimulating colours and adopting a natural, calm colour scheme. Dark flooring and feature colours can help with wayfinding.

Small, deliberate spaces such as nooks can help users to retreat from a busy environment. Spaces that traditionally serve a particular purpose – such as a dining space – should be designed with other uses in mind outside of their 'core' user hours.

Visually complex or distracting environments such as exposed pipework and lots of display should be avoided.

# Inclusion



Flexible and fun environments that encourage movement and activity for all should be provided as this helps learners with additional needs to take a movement break without being made to feel different from their peers.

Corridors should be avoided where possible; circulation routes should have plenty of space for passing and incorporate breakout or other support spaces to provide a more welcoming, more functional and less intimidating space.

Circulation routes should be designed to limit footfall past or through key learning spaces to limit opportunities for disruption.

Creating visual and textural links indoors with nature through biophilic design will improve wellbeing.

Comfort and a feeling of homely relaxation have been identified as priorities for learners throughout our recent school consultations, also promoting feelings of improved wellbeing.

Structures, installations and furnishings should not provide climbing opportunities.

Lighting should be customisable to provide for a variety of different activities.

## The Role of Digital

The effective and creative implementation of new and emerging technology into the design of new and repurposed buildings is crucial to improving outcomes for learners.

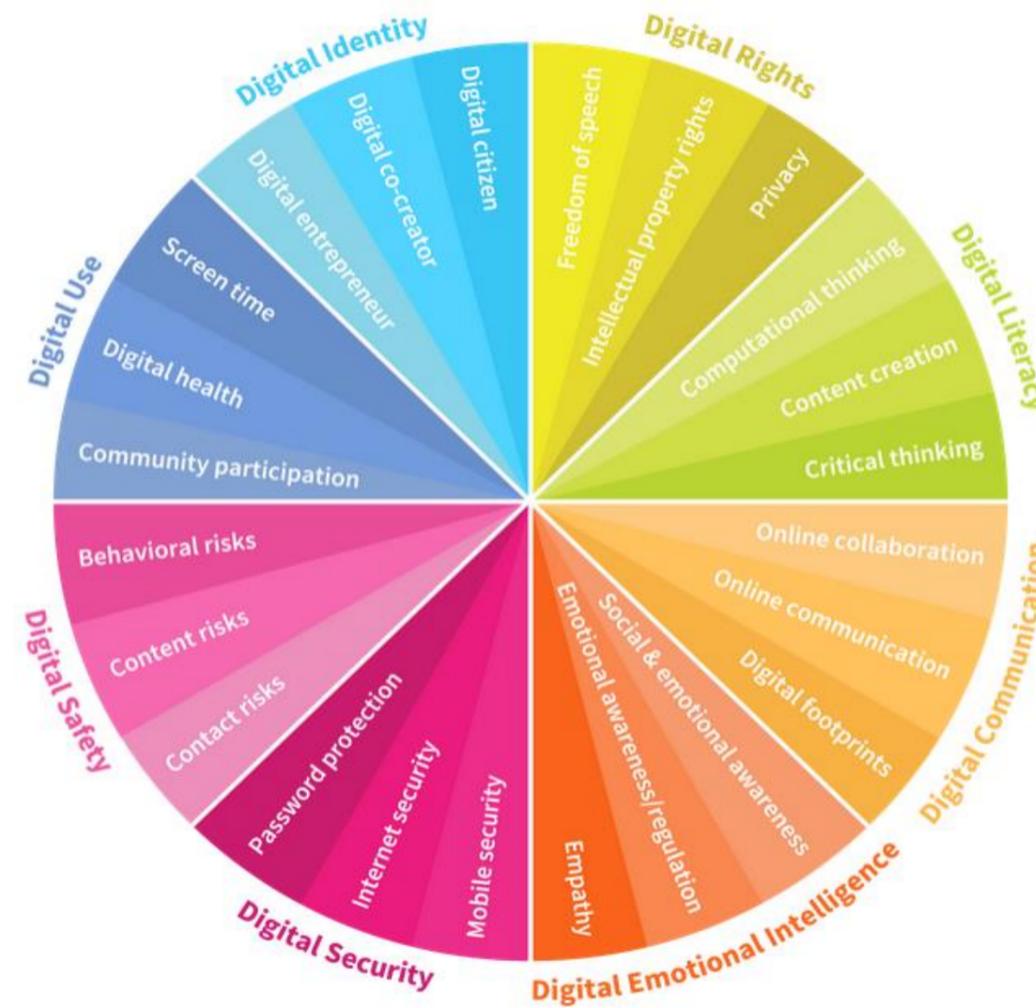
The role of new technology is fundamental to the future of teaching and learning, to empower learners with the skills and abilities required for lifelong learning. The role of digital learning though, is less about learning discreet skills associated with knowing how to use technology and more about technology being able to facilitate, support and improve the ways of working that are needed if we are to better equip learners for the future.

New buildings should benefit from a digital 'mix and match' approach, providing teachers and learners with more choice in how technology can support and enhance teaching and learning.

Advances in peer to peer and video conferencing technologies should be embedded in digital infrastructure to create immersive environments. This type of technology is being used to support collaborative and partnership learning across established networks both locally and nationally. It embraces the vision for future learning environments, to support equity and accessibility as well as encouraging partnership and community collaboration.

With the move towards agile learning environments and away from traditional classroom space teachers and learners need to be able to access their technology flexibly. Teachers will employ mobile technologies so they can work from anywhere within the Learning Estate. School pupils will each have a mobile device which may be cast to a screen to allow presentation and collaboration.

Creative solutions should be used to provide multi-purpose spaces that are digitally enabled. ICT should be engaged from the early stages of the design phase and throughout the project to create technologically immersive spaces that work.



### What does it mean to be a digital centre of excellence?

- A place that uses technology to enhance learning and teaching
- A place where use of technology is an inspiration to others
- A place that seeks out digital links with the community and employers

### How can we achieve this?

- By the inspiring use of technology that encourages and welcomes lifelong learning in the local community and promotes enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- By developing a flexible and dynamic environment that can accommodate a wealth of activities in a variety of settings that can change to meet demand over time.
- By creating an inviting space where the whole community can use the facilities during and out of school hours

# Digital





# Sustainability



Edinburgh's [Vision for playgrounds](#) (illustration by Michaela Lyons)

## The Importance of Outdoor Spaces

The provision, design and value of outdoor learning spaces is considered by City of Edinburgh Council to be as important as that of interior learning spaces. This will ensure creative approaches to outdoor learning activities are embedded in the curriculum and connect people with nature. This connection should extend to interior design, creating a mutual two-way relationship between internal and external learning landscapes, promoting positive health and wellbeing through biophilic design.

We believe that the Learning Estate's outdoor spaces should be quality places for play and learning and have strong links with the community. New schools will promote out of hours use of their grounds and even consider shared use of some spaces, such as growing spaces, during the school day.

Our [Vision for playgrounds](#) provides further general detail on our aspiration for our school grounds and a brief for the design of outdoor spaces.

**"Education can bring about a fundamental shift in how we think, act, and discharge our responsibilities toward one another and the planet."**

['Why education is the key to sustainable development'](#), Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO

## Visible Sustainability

We want to provide a landscape that encourages learners to be responsible citizens who understand their environment and nurture a sense of wonder in the natural world. We want children and young people to establish a healthy relationship with food by growing and preparing it themselves.

We also need children and young people to be aware of emerging sustainable technologies and understand the difference they make and their importance. Accordingly, we believe that sustainable technologies should not be hidden from view. Building users need to understand how and why a building is working to limit the impact it has on our environment. The building itself should be an educational resource to inspire the next generation to think and act responsibly.

## Sustainable Lifestyle

Sustainable living should permeate every aspect of the learning estate, through design of buildings that enable more energy efficient use, to ensuring that building users have the opportunity and are motivated to travel by environmentally friendly means. There are huge benefits for communities to engage with learning for sustainability.

### Sustainable Practice

A significant barrier to outdoor learning in Scotland is willingness to be outside in wet, windy and cold weather.

Solutions for easy access in all weathers should be designed into the building and landscape. Considering use of canopies to create useable sheltered outdoor space, barrier matting and easy access wet weather gear storage and drying.

## Addressing the Site

The location and orientation of new Learning Estate buildings and the way they connect and relate to surrounding infrastructure, spaces and communities is critical.

The design and location of new buildings should respond to the site and the context. This will vary from project to project. However, in general, new buildings should endeavour to adhere to the following:

### Orientation

- The building should limit over shadowing to external play spaces;
- The building should be orientated to offer the optimum thermal performance;

- The building should be orientated so that its main entrance is easily accessible from site boundaries.

### Form and Design

- The building appearance will be inspiring and make a statement reflecting the Council's values;
- The building appearance will be something the wider community can be proud of and feel a connection too;
- The main entrance area of the building should be welcoming and avoid an institutional or sterile feel;
- The building will have easy access to external spaces from its core internal learning and teaching spaces;
- The building will ideally be a compact form with social spaces at its heart and travel distances between core adjacencies limited;
- The building will be designed with a clearly developed expansion strategy to future proof against changes in demand.

### Landscaping

- The landscaping will be an extension of the building, in general offering more 'formal', 'organised' spaces close to the building getting progressively 'wilder' and more natural towards site boundaries;
- There will be no parking places provided other than for disabled users except where a strong case for more can be demonstrated;
- There will be no provision made for drop off or pick-up spaces or turning circles;
- Active travel should be at the heart of decision making when considering off-site connections and supporting facilities.

## Stakeholder Engagement

### Co-creating

The Scottish Government's Learning Estate Strategy identifies good consultation as one of its ten key principles:

*"Good consultation about learning environment, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all."*

The Council's own consultation policy highlights the importance in listening to and acting upon the views of stakeholders across the public sector. It highlights that "effective consultation involves genuine dialogue, respect, integrity, transparency and accountability. It also involves the ability to evidence how views were sought, considered and how they influenced the decisions made."

Accordingly, a carefully planned programme of engagement with all stakeholders and interested parties will be fundamental to any project where changes are being made to a learning and teaching environment or the ways in which people will engage with their community resources.

### Engaging with Children and Young People

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that children and young people have the human right to have opinions and for these opinions to be heard and taken seriously. Article 12 is also concerned with making sure that children and young people feel able to express their opinions – regardless of their age.

Design Teams should be prepared to work with children and young people directly and/or support school staff in undertaking engagement exercises to elicit children and young people's views on learning and teaching environments and any solutions or designs being developed. The consultation and engagement work should involve children and young people in a way that supports the objectives of the project and benefits their own learning and development. Planning for this engagement should be arranged with school management and should focus on answering the following questions:

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

Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future

### Planning for Pupil Engagement

- What is the aim and purpose of the consultation?
- What are the objectives?
- What are the areas of the project, design, problem or solution on which views/advice are being sought?
- Who is being consulted and when are they being consulted?
- What are the most appropriate methods?
- Who will be involved in carrying out consultation work and in what role?
- How will background information or knowledge useful in reaching views or decisions be shared?
- If the project is over a long period of time, how will pupils be kept engaged and/or informed?
- How and when will feedback be delivered?
- What other learning and development opportunities might exist as part of the wider project?

<b>Design For People</b>	<b>Design With People</b>	<b>Design by People</b>
<b>Inspired by People</b>	Learning from People	Empowering People
<b>Inferred needs</b>	Translated needs	Self-recognized needs
<b>The thing itself</b>	Process and tools	Platform and vision
<b>Users &amp; Consumers</b>	Creators & Designers	Collaborators & Participants

*Three approaches to how people influence the design process ('Inclusive design and schools', Porter, 2018)*

## Key Documents and Reference Material

- **Education (Scotland) Act 1980**  
National legislation covering the main aspects of Education in Scotland
- **Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004**  
Local Authorities must provide support for any child with additional support needs.
- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**  
A human rights treaty that protects the rights of children and young people including their right to be heard in decisions affecting them (Article 12) and their right to play.
- **Getting It Right for Every Child**  
Central to all government and local authority policies, GIRFEC places children and young people at the heart of decision-making with a focus on what actions will make a positive difference to their circumstances and how these can be delivered.
- **Curriculum for Excellence**  
The Scottish national curriculum for 3-18 year olds aimed at helping children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- **Curriculum for Excellence Through Outdoor Learning**  
Recognises the importance of outdoor learning and provides guidance to practitioners to embed the use of outdoor learning and teaching in school activities.
- **Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007**  
Places health promotion at the heart of a school's activities. Every school pupil in Scotland should receive at least two hours per week of physical education and two periods in S1 to S4.
- **The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**  
Provides the legislative framework for looked after children and young people and their rights.
- **Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy: Connecting People, Places and Learning**  
Sets out the national vision for Scotland's learning estate and the guiding principles and objectives.
- **Vision 2030+: Learning for Sustainability**  
National Action Plan to embed learning for sustainability in Curriculum for Excellence to enable building of a socially just, sustainable and equitable society.
- **Space to Grow**  
Design guidance for early learning and child care and out of school care settings. While aimed at pre-school, many of the principles apply to early stages at primary school.
- **City of Edinburgh Council Business Plan**  
Sets out the Council's priorities and how it will deliver on the aims of Edinburgh's Community Plan.
- **Edinburgh Poverty Commission: A Just Capital – Actions to End Poverty in Edinburgh** Final report of the Edinburgh Poverty

Commission following its inquiry into poverty in Edinburgh, its causes, consequences and solutions.

- **Edinburgh Climate Commission**  
The Edinburgh Climate Commission is an independent body working to accelerate action on climate change in Edinburgh.
- **SportScotland**  
Scotland's national sporting authority provides guidance on development of sporting facilities and is a statutory consultee through the Planning process.
- **Participants, Not Pawns: Guidance on Consulting Children and Young People on School Closures (and Other Significant Changes)**  
This guide from Children in Scotland is focused on the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010 requirements but its principles are applicable in all kinds of change projects affecting children and young people.
- **"How Good Is Our School? 4th Edition 2015**

*"Care needs to be taken to ensure that ambitions to improve the sustainability of the school estate are kept up front at each stage of the design process to achieve the desired outcome. Buildings and grounds need to support learning for sustainability pedagogy and practise and include the provision of thoughtfully developed greenspace to support learning and facilitate daily contact with nature and natural play."*

Vision 2030+ Concluding Report of the Learning for Sustainability National Implementation Group, March 2016

