
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	21 January 2014
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report	EDUCOM/13/14/EM
Contact Officer:	Eddie Montgomery	Contact No:	01475 712472
Subject:	St. John's Primary School – Decant Options		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise the Committee in respect of options for the decant of St John's Primary School in connection with the proposed refurbishment project which is programmed to commence in 2014.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The St John's Primary School project is included in the current School Estate Funding Model for progression in 2014/15 and was one of the projects brought forward as part of the acceleration of the primary schools programme agreed following the Council's budget setting process and the special budget meeting of Thursday 14th February 2013. The current proposals include the use of the former Highlanders Academy building as decant accommodation. The Parent Council has requested that the former St Stephen's High School building be investigated as an alternative to the former Highlanders Academy building. The report outlines the issues and compares the relative costs and educational advantages associated with use of both buildings as decant accommodation for St John's Primary School.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Committee consider the options outlined in this report and agree the recommendation of progressing with the former St Stephen's High School option for decant of St John's Primary School.
- 3.2 That the Committee approve that Highlanders Academy is declared surplus to requirements and disposal of the site is remitted to the Environment and Regeneration Committee.

Albert Henderson
Corporate Director Education,
Communities &
Organisational Development
11th December 2013

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The existing School Estate Management Plan includes an allowance for the refurbishment of St John's Primary School including an extension to form a new dining area. The project timeline was previously 2019/20 within the model however the project was brought forward to 2014/15 as part of the acceleration of the primary schools programme agreed following the Council's budget setting process and the special budget meeting of Thursday 14th February 2013.
- 4.2 The main reason for advancing St John's Primary School over other schools currently awaiting refurbishment was the availability of decant accommodation and the opportunity to utilise the former Highlanders Academy building which was vacated in June 2012 with St John's being the only school that could fit within the available space. The existing working capacity of St John's Primary School is 265 and the current census roll is 196. The working capacity of the Highlanders building was 262 (excluding the Gaelic unit and the Nursery which shared accommodation within the building). The Parent Council has, during the initial consultation stages, requested that the use of the former St Stephen's High School be considered as an alternative for decant of the school.
- 4.3 It should be noted that the scope of the St John's PS refurbishment project has altered from that included in the SEMP model as the inclusion of an extension to form a 24/24 nursery class was being investigated as an option subject to confirmation of available funding. Funding has now been confirmed from the Scottish Government in connection with the implementation of the Children and Young People Bill and this project will be put forward as top priority for utilisation of a proportion of the anticipated capital allocation. This will be the subject of a separate report to Committee in the new year to advise on proposals in connection with the Bill and use of the allocated funding.

5.0 PROJECT DECANT OPTION APPRAISAL

5.1 COMPARATIVE PROPERTY COSTS

The School Estate Team have, in conjunction with officers from Finance, Facilities Management, Environmental Services and Education Services, compiled data on the relative costs of utilising both buildings which are summarised in Appendix 1. A brief summary of the most significant/relevant cost factors is given below:

Running Costs

- Non Domestic Rates (NDR) – significantly higher cost in connection with the St Stephen's High School building. It would be possible to obtain a reduction in the NDR charges by carrying out a partial demolition of the building (see Appendix 2), or by negotiating with the Assessor to split the entry, with the unused part having a notional rateable value. Negotiations are currently on-going with the Assessor and a formal response is expected in January 2014.
- Utilities – higher costs in connection with a larger footprint/facility at St Stephen's HS. It is possible to reduce the impact of this through partial demolition or isolation/zoning of the heating and electrical distribution systems to reduce overall consumption.
- Cleaning – higher costs in connection with a larger footprint/facility at St Stephen's HS. This would be partially offset by a reduction in travel costs if staff were required to relocate to Highlanders from St John's.

Alterations (One-Off Costs)

- St Stephen's HS Building - The facility is in use (final lets ceasing week ending 15th December) and the accommodation is in good overall condition. It is anticipated that the areas proposed to be used would not require decoration or floor coverings and are close to "walk-in" condition. The only works anticipated as required would be in connection with altering the heating, fire & intruder alarm, CCTV and other services installations to suit the reduced accommodation. Where possible the cost of the work have been investigated through the Council's term contractors and budget costs obtained for alteration works - estimated value £31k.
- Former Highlanders Academy Building - The scope of work required to the electrical distribution and power & lighting systems within Highlanders is more extensive than anticipated and necessitates a partial rewire. This is further complicated by the presence of asbestos above ceilings in the building. The building has been vacant since June 2012 and in the period before it was vacated there was very little investment in the building given that it would become surplus to requirement. There is a need for re-decoration and floor covering replacement in the areas to be used and some minor alterations to suit the needs of St John's Primary School. There has also been a substantial number of windows smashed by vandals which are currently boarded and require re-glazing. Where possible costs have been estimated by Building Services with budget costs provided for other elements through Technical Services and Property Maintenance – estimated value £277k.

5.2 EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES

The Head of Education Services was consulted in respect of the relative advantages of both options which have been summarised below:

Advantages:

Former St Stephen's High School Option

- St Stephen's High school site is closer to St John's Primary School and would enable the children to remain in the school catchment area.
- The facilities available (even with reduced footprint option) would allow the school to have a separate assembly/gym hall and dining area.
- Direct access to existing 2G pitch which would enhance the school's PE provision.
- Ample parking for staff, visitors and on site school buses turning/waiting area to aid traffic management in connection with decant transport provision.
- Existing classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards (relocation to Highlanders required as part of alteration works for that option).
- Transition arrangements for P7 pupils who would be moving to the Port Glasgow Community Campus would be enhanced as pupils would be within walking distance of the new secondary school campus.
- St John's staff and pupils would be within walking distance of the other associated primary schools which would make participation in cluster school activities easier as no transport costs would be incurred.
- The St John's Primary School Breakfast Club could continue if the school is decanted to the temporary shared campus.
- A decant to the St Stephen's building would allow St John's to remain within the school parish and enable the school to have continued access to the parish priest.
- After-school clubs could also continue as it is not too far away for children to be picked up by parents.

Former Highlanders' Academy Building Option

In comparison to the St Stephen's HS option there are no distinct Educational advantages of utilising this building.

5.3 OTHER RISKS / CONSIDERATIONS

St Stephen's High School Option

At this time there has been no confirmation from the Assessor (being sought) of the ability to treat the building as 2 separate entries on the register. This principle has been accepted in the past and if possible would have the advantage of:

- Reducing the potential capital cost impact of phasing the demolition of the St Stephen's HS building which is included in the SEMP capital programme (£558k). The allowances within the programme have proven robust to date and part of this may be able to be contained within the current allowance however it should be noted that phasing the demolition could increase the cost by 20% or circa £100k.
- Reducing the risk of delay or over-run in connection with partial demolition which is anticipated would not be completed until May 2014 at the earliest. There would be additional security costs of approximately £20,000 for boarding up the unused parts of the building.

It should be noted that should the rates appeal be unsuccessful it is not proposed to proceed with a partial demolition solution in any case as the cost saving in terms of rates would be offset in capital cost increases of phased demolition.

Former Highlanders' Academy Building Option

The extent of work required to the school is more extensive than previously anticipated. Although the majority of the re-decoration, floor coverings and minor alteration works have been scoped and priced by Building Services awaiting order, the largest element i.e. the partial rewiring will have to be progressed to tender as soon as possible to allow the building to be ready for decant.

5.4 SUMMARY

It is clear from the above that the preferred option in terms of Educational advantage is the use of the former St Stephen's High School building. A move to this site would be less disruptive for pupils and families. It would support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence with its range of facilities, and support the important transition arrangements for P7 pupils due to its proximity to the new Port Glasgow Community Campus. The parent community of St John's Primary School will be familiar with the site either through having other children in St Stephen's High School or having been pupils there themselves. This would provide some reassurance to parents who understandably can get anxious when their children are decanted to another school site. Being within walking distance of the new Port Glasgow Community Campus and the other associated primary schools will enhance opportunities for both joint pupil and staff activities. Overall, there are sound educational reasons for stating a preference for a decant to the St Stephen's HS building which include taking into account the impact on the well-being of the St John's Primary School community.

The temporary use of St Stephen's will not delay the subsequent use of the site as the School will be demolished immediately after St John's return to their refurbished school.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The tables below outlines the estimated cost implications of both options:

Former Highlanders Building Option

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Revenue	SEMP One-Off Costs	From 2013/14 and 2014/15	£ 277,000	n/a	Costs to be contained in the overall SEMP allowance. Current project allowance is £517k.
Revenue	SEMP Model	From 2013/14 and 2014/15	£317,000 <hr/> £594,000	n/a	

Former St Stephen's HS Building Option

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Revenue	SEMP One-Off Costs	From 2013/14 and 2014/15	£31,000	n/a	As above
Revenue	SEMP Model	From 2013/14 and 2014/15	+£572,000 <hr/> +£ 603,000	n/a	

6.2 The cost comparison above indicates that subject to a satisfactory resolution of the NDR issue that St Stephen's provides a better educational outcome at marginally higher cost. It is proposed that the overall costs in connection with either option would be contained within the allowances for one-off revenue costs in the current SEMP funding model.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 There are no direct staffing implications in respect of the report and as such the Head of Organisational Development, HR and Performance has not been consulted.

7.2 There are no legal issues arising from the content of this report and as such the Head of Legal and Democratic Services has not been consulted.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There are no equalities issues.

9.0 REPOPULATION

9.1 There are no repopulation issues.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Budget cost estimates – various.

Comparison of Building Running Costs for 15 month Period

	Highlanders	St Stephen's	St Stephen's 41% demolished / split entry
NDR	31,204	223,725	131,998
Water	8,125	14,755	14,755
Refuse	2,820	2,820	2,820
Gas	18,750	80,739	60,554
Electricity	10,375	17,175	16,000
Cleaning	31,000	63,000	63,000
Cleaners Travel	3,360	0	0
Janitors	31,250	31,250	31,250
Transport Costs	162,000	150,000	150,000
Security Costs			20,000
Total Running Costs	<u>298,884</u>	<u>583,464</u>	<u>490,377</u>

Assumptions

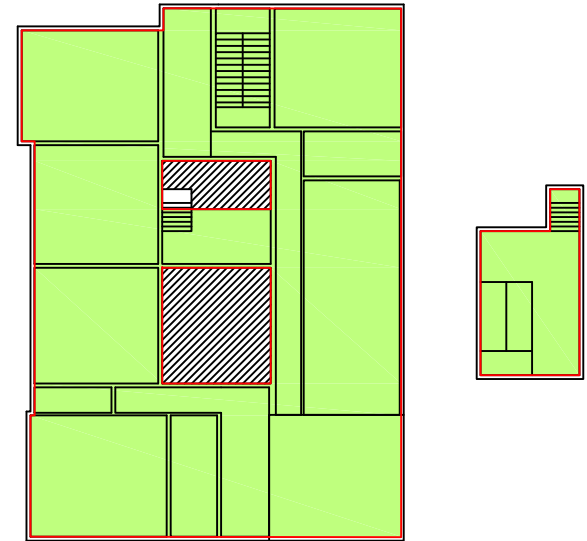
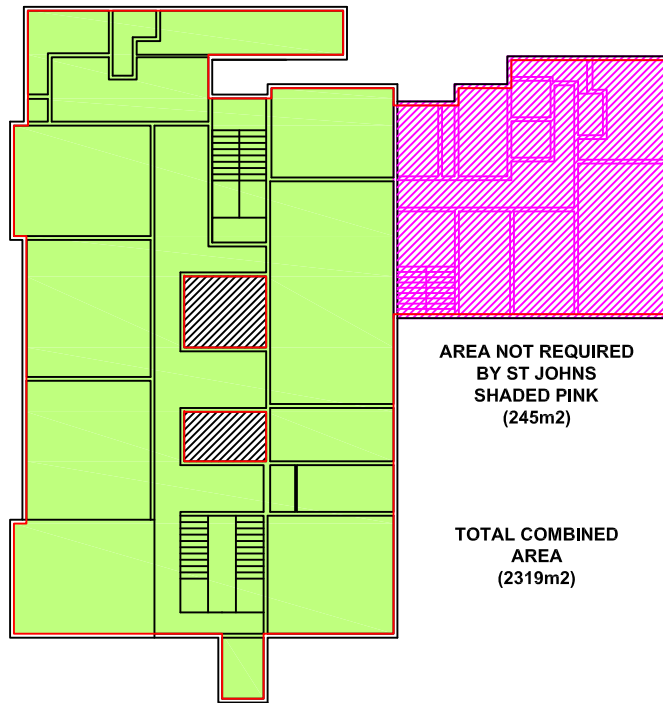
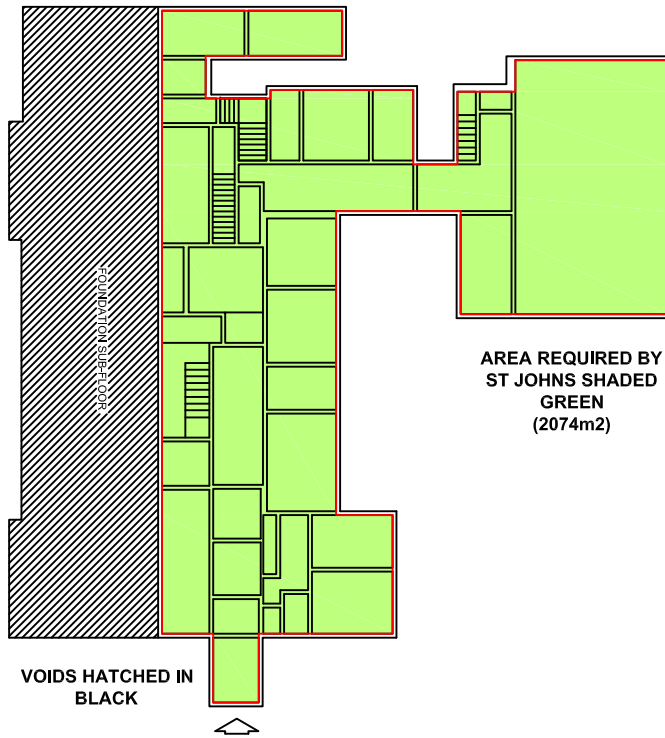
- 1 NDR will be reduced by 41% following demolition or via split property entry - await confirmation from Assessor.
- 2 Security costs assume agreement reached with Assessor and empty part of building is boarded up
- 3 Water uses historical NDR for fixed element of bills so no reduction from demolition. Consumption same in either building.
- 4 Refuse has same number of bins and uplifts regardless of location.
- 5 Gas consumption will reduce by 25% in smaller St Stephen's
- 6 Cleaning - only occupied parts of St Stephen's cleaned so no reduction from demolition.
- 7 Cleaners Travel - 3 cleaners will receive £560 one-off payments for move to Greenock and back again - per Job Evaluation guidance.
- 8 Janitors - one janitor will be employed regardless of location.
- 9 Transports - 4 x 53 seater coaches required - £2,700 per bus for Greenock and £2,500 per bus for Port Glasgow
- 10 If a partial demolition has to be carried out there would be an additional cost of £100,000 as this is more than the NDR saved it would not be economic

Empty Costs for 6 month Period

	Highlanders	St Stephens
NDR	11,238	40,271
Water	1,250	4,231
Gas	3,310	10,895
Electricity	3,000	6,300
Security Costs		20,000
Total Empty Costs	<u>18,798</u>	<u>81,697</u>

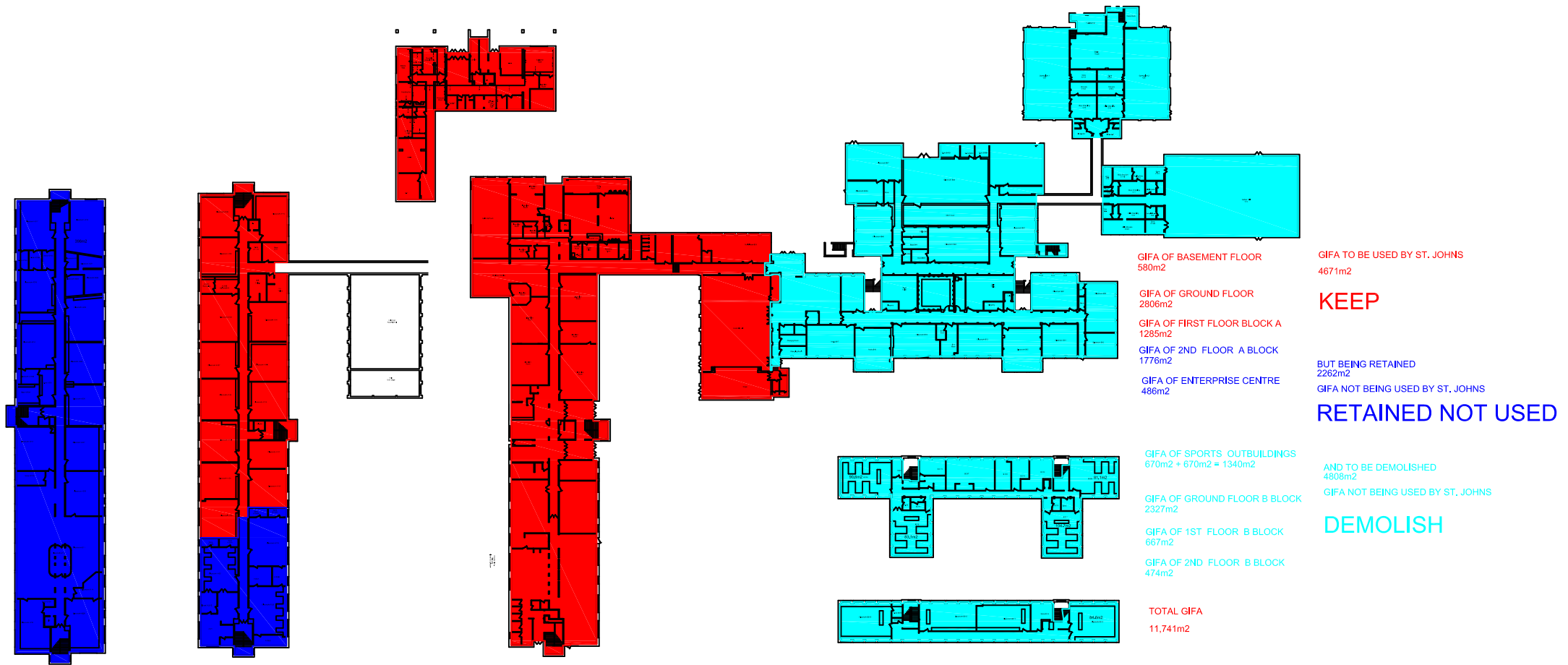
Assumptions

- 1 NDR Highlanders 10% relief per month
- 2 NDR St Stephen's - 100% relief for 3 month then 10% relief for 3 months
- 3 Water & Gas - only fixed element of bills and no consumption



APPENDIX 2.

**HIGHLANDERS
ACADEMY FLOOR
PLANS**



APPENDIX 2
St Stephen's High School