Strategic Review of the Royal Blind School

May 2012

Royal Blind
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Foreword

This Strategic Review of the Royal Blind School was commissioned in December 2011 by Chief Executive, Richard Hellewell, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Royal Blind.

Julie Fardell, Principal of the Royal Blind School, was seconded to carry out the Strategic Review in the period 9 January to 30 March 2012.

The purpose of this Strategic Review of the Royal Blind School is to produce a fully researched and considered report as the basis for firm decisions regarding the shape of Royal Blind’s contribution to the education of children and young people with visual impairment in the medium and long-term future.

The full terms of reference for the Strategic Review appear in Appendix 1.

This final report of the Strategic Review of the Royal Blind School summarises the findings from the review process and makes recommendations for the long-term future of the Royal Blind School. It also outlines the transitional steps required to achieve the recommended long-term vision and secure the short to medium-term future of the school and its pupils.

The information, conclusions and recommendations contained in the report have been provided to assist the Board of Directors of Royal Blind to make decisions about the future of the School.
Photo: Pupils playing ball games in the multi-use games area (MUGA) on the Craigmillar Park campus
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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction

This Strategic Review of the Royal Blind School was undertaken in the context of a decline in pupil numbers, the resulting deficit budget and the impending report of the “Strategic Review of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs” (the Doran Review).

1.2. Method

The methodology used to carry out the Strategic Review included:

- Reviewing relevant legislation, literature and prevalence data
- Analysing enrolment trends and influences
- Surveying and interviewing key stakeholders and analysing the responses
- Evaluating alternative service delivery strategies

1.3. Key Findings

1.3.1. The number of pupils enrolled at the Royal Blind School has decreased over the past few years. This has resulted from fewer new-pupil enrolments and later referral of pupils. However, referral patterns over the past 5 years, although lower than the previous ten years, have been relatively stable.

1.3.2. Current pupil numbers reflect previous referral patterns which occurred in the context of a different legal and policy background.

1.3.3. Survey responses from Local Authorities (LA’s) indicate that they expect to refer about 16 pupils to the Royal Blind School over the next 5 years, an average of approximately 3.2 pupils per year. Two main factors mitigate against higher referral levels:

- The presumption to mainstream
- The preference for children to be educated in their local area to preserve family and community relationships

1.3.4. As the LA’s are the main customers of the Royal Blind School and the chief drivers of the usage of educational facilities in Scotland, it is essential that their opinions inform Royal Blind’s policy when planning the future of the School.

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1 Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act of 2004 and 2009 (as amended)
1.3.5. While the recommendations of the Doran Review are not due to be given to Scottish Ministers until summer 2012, it is unlikely that there will be any major change to the concordat which fully recognises the role of LA’s as the major drivers of educational strategy and pupil placement. Through the legislation education authorities have statutory responsibility for making educational provision for all children living in their areas.

1.3.6. Given the trend to include most learners with visual impairment (VI) in local mainstream schools, especially those who have VI only, the long-term role for the Royal Blind School will be to enrol the small number of children with VI whose complex needs cannot be met by the Local Authority (LA) without assistance.

1.3.7. A projection of future pupil numbers was carried out based on current enrolment trends, an extrapolation of the enrolment of current pupils and feedback from LA’s. The projection forecasts that the pupil roll will continue to decline until it settles at a steady enrolment of approximately 25 pupils.

1.4. Recommendations

1.4.1. The Strategic Review establishes the need for Royal Blind to continue operating the school in the long term, but with the expectation that the pupil roll will stabilise in eight years’ time at 25 pupils, approximately half of whom will be residential. It is expected that these pupils will predominantly have visual impairment (VI) together with other additional support needs (ASN). The pupil age range will be concentrated in the secondary department with a small number of pupils in upper primary.

1.4.2. To provide the best facilities and achieve substantial efficiencies, it is recommended that the school be consolidated onto a single campus at Canaan Lane. Staffing numbers will need to be reduced in line with declining pupil numbers. These strategies will result in a reduction of the cost per pupil due to reduced overheads and staffing costs.

1.4.3. Although the pupil population at the School will be small, the School will continue to play an important role in the continuum of educational services available to children with VI across Scotland.

1.4.4. It is also recommended that the school diversify its services to become the National VI Educational Resource Centre for Scotland, the purpose of which is to support children and young people with additional support needs overcome their barriers to learning and realise their potential. These roles are consistent with the stated purpose of the GASS grant.

1.4.5. Consistent with the Scottish Government led Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), pupils will study a broad, general curriculum until the end of S3 and greater depth of study in S4 to S6, the senior phase. This will necessitate
maintaining a team of specialist subject teachers in addition to class teachers.

1.4.6. In response to the anticipated age profile of pupils, there will be a strong emphasis in the Senior Phase on vocational learning and the knowledge and skills required to aid transition to adult life.

1.4.7. The projected timeline for the recommended strategy is:

- **2012** Strategy adopted and announced
- **2014** All teaching moves to Canaan Lane, main Craigmillar Park building vacated
- **2016** All residential services move to Canaan Lane, residential hostels vacated
- **2020** School reaches its long term size of 25
2. Methodology

2.1. Overview

The methodology used to carry out the Strategic Review involved collecting, analysing and interpreting a range of relevant information including:

- Reviewing the context in which the Royal Blind School currently operates. This included a review of:
  - The earlier Blue Sky Report (Ravenscroft, 2006) and the resulting project proposals
  - Relevant legislation
  - Royal Blind planning documents
  - Funding
  - The Doran Review
  - Data on the prevalence of VI and the attainment of pupils with VI
  - International and UK practices in the education of people with VI
  - Relevant literature

- Gathering opinions through:
  - Surveying Local Authorities
  - Surveying staff
  - Surveying parents of children with VI in the School
  - Interviewing a range of key stakeholders

- Interpreting the information by:
  - Projecting pupil numbers
  - Analysing referral trends and influences
  - Financial modelling

- Establishing the need for a viable and worthwhile school in the future

- Considering alternative long-term strategies for service delivery

- Considering the need for a National VI Educational Resource Centre

- Selecting and recommending viable long-term solutions

- Modelling the recommended solution and testing its validity, including the transitions required to reach the long term strategy

The author met fortnightly with the Chief Executive and the Convenor of the Education Committee to discuss findings, methods and future directions throughout the course of the Strategic review.
2.2. Surveys

2.2.1. Surveys\(^2\) were sent to all 32 Scottish LA’s, the 4 English LEA’s from which we have enrolled pupils and the one Northern Ireland LA from which we have an enrolled pupil. The intention of the survey was to determine the LA’s perception of probable future referral and enrolment patterns at the Royal Blind School by discovering:

- How many pupils each LA anticipate they would refer to the Royal Blind School in the next 5 years
- The age and disability profile of likely referrals
- The reasons for referring and not referring pupils to the School
- The perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Royal Blind School.

2.2.2. Surveys were sent to all Royal Blind School staff.\(^3\) The intention of the survey was to obtain the views of staff members on what the school has to offer and how its work could be effectively and efficiently developed in the future. The survey sampled staff opinion on:

- Perceptions the main strengths of the School
- Why they thought LA’s might be reluctant to refer pupils
- The additional services they would like to see the School offer
- Strategies that could be implemented to achieve cost savings
- What they thought the Royal Blind School might look like in 5 years’ time.

2.2.3. Surveys were sent to all parents/carers of currently enrolled pupils.\(^4\) The intention of the survey was to sample parents’ experiences and opinions on a range of topics relating to the enrolment of children with VI at the Royal Blind School. The survey asked:

- What were important considerations in enrolling their child at the Royal Blind School
- Why they thought LA’s might be reluctant to place children at the School
- What additional services they would like to see offered by the School

\(^2\) The survey for Local Authorities appears in Appendix 3

\(^3\) The survey for staff appears in Appendix 4.

\(^4\) The survey for parents and carers appears in Appendix 5.
2.3. Interviews

2.3.1. Interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders including

- Managers from other schools:
  - Janice MacNeill – CEO Donaldson’s School
  - Neil Squires – CEO – Harmeny School

- Parents – Katriona Goode from Canaan Lane and Fiona Lovett from Craigmillar Park

- Personnel from Local Authorities:
  - Martin Vallely - Senior education manager - Edinburgh
  - Ian Wallace - Senior Educational Psychologist - North Ayrshire
  - Alison White – Senior Social Work Manager – West Lothian

- Pupils (past and present)
  - Jamie Fitchie, Lee Haddow and Alexander Stewart - school leavers from Craigmillar Park in 2011
  - Lee Brunton and Derick Locke - school leavers from Craigmillar Park in 2010 (School leavers in these two years included both male and female pupils from both campuses. The pupils interviewed are those who were most readily able to be reached and to articulate their views. Although all male, their views are considered to be representative of the majority of school leavers.)
  - The current members of the Pupils Council (one pupil from each secondary form class)

- Staff of the Royal Blind School and Royal Blind
  - Roseanne Allison and Jan Thomson – Deputy Heads of Care
  - Angie Bisson – Orientation and Mobility Specialist
  - Elaine Brackenridge, Sally Mair and Cari Mannion – Depute Head
  - Derek Buglass - Finance Manager
  - Eilidh Burgess – Nurse
  - Susan Graham – Therapy Assistant
  - Richard Hellewell – Chief Executive
  - Julie Jamieson – Head of Care
  - Frances Murray – Lead Nurse
  - George Notman – Facilities Manager
  - Sandra Sabiston – Development Manager
  - Teachers who were in attendance at a Teachers’ meeting and a Collegiate Activity Time (CAT) session. Owing to the number of part-time teachers, the vast majority but not all teachers were present. They were interviewed as a group, not individually.
  - Monika Vest, Mary Siggs – Therapists
Stakeholder Group Representatives:
- Dominic Everett – Families and Education Manager - RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People)
- Fiona Lovett and Willie Rutherford – Members of the Executive of fSDC (for Scotland’s Disabled Children)
- Janis Sugden – Coordinator – Scottish Sensory Centre
- David Thompson – Senior Policy Advisor, Learning Directorate, Scottish Government
- Lorna Walker – Administrator – Educating Through Care Scotland (ETCS)

2.3.2. These people were interviewed in order to gain more in-depth detail than could be achieved from the Surveys. The interviews endeavoured to discover the background information to explain the range of interests and opinions among stakeholders of the School. The focus of the interviews was to:
- Determine what the school does well and how it can best contribute to the education of children with VI in Scotland
- Identify barriers to performing this role
- Explore mechanisms for delivering services more efficiently and effectively

2.3.3. In addition to these interviews to elicit the individual views of staff members, some members of staff were interviewed a second time. In the second interviews, they passed on views that had been expressed to them by Head Teachers at other schools, Peripatetic Teachers of the VI, Educational Psychologists, Social Workers and Medical Personnel in the context of Pupil Review meetings and initial enquiries to the school.

2.3.4. It would have been informative to receive more feedback from parents of Royal Blind School pupils in order to gain sufficient opinions to assess to what extent opinions are similar or dissimilar. It would also have been useful to have interviewed VI pupils who do not attend the Royal Blind School, and their parents. This would have provided an alternative perspective on the educational experience of these young people with VI. Although there was an excellent rate of return from LA Surveys, the interviews were predominantly with personnel from LA’s that are in relatively close proximity to the school. Interviews with personnel from more distant locations may have added to the knowledge of what is needed in terms of a national VI educational provision.

2.4. Pupil Projections

A projection of pupil enrolments was made, based on the current pupil roll and on anticipated enrolments trends, informed by feedback from the LA surveys and interviews. Pupil numbers, age profile and disability type were projected on an
annual basis until an anticipated steady enrolment number is reached informed by our intake assumptions.

2.5. Analysis of Different Strategies for Service Delivery

A number of alternative strategies for service delivery were considered. Options including a one campus model based on either of the two existing campuses or in a new location were considered. Options such as developing as a National VI Education Resource Centre or creating geographic hubs throughout Scotland were considered.

2.6. Financial Modelling

Costs per pupil were calculated based on the current service, on a long-term pupil projection and preferred strategy for service delivery.

The cost of capital works to make the Canaan Lane campus suitable for use as a one-campus school both in the medium and long term was estimated.

Photo: Secondary pupil reading Braille in the school library
3. Background to the Strategic Review

3.1. Our Present Experience and Vision

3.1.1. Pupil numbers at the Royal Blind School have been declining over the past 5 years and are projected to fall further over the next 10 years.

3.1.2. This reduction in pupil numbers has restricted opportunities for pupils to learn interactively with their peers, and impacts financially on Royal Blind, which is now subsidising the cost of operating the Royal Blind School from donated and investment income and reserves. The subsidy is approximately £1.3million per annum.

3.1.3. The Board is keen to explore new ways in which Royal Blind can contribute to the education of children and young people with visual impairment (VI) in Scotland. However any future provision must be within our means to provide, in terms of its call on voluntary funds. The Board believes that any service that forms part of a statutory obligation should be funded by bodies with the responsibility for meeting that obligation.

3.2. The Blue Sky Report

3.2.1. The last major review of the strategic direction of the Royal Blind School was contained in the Blue Sky Report (Ravenscroft, 2006), commissioned in response to a Care Commission inspection report which recommended that the residential accommodation at Craigmillar Park should not be located within the school building and that the Scottish Braille Press was inappropriately placed within the Craigmillar Park campus.

3.2.2. The Blue Sky Report initially presented 7 models to address these issues. Upon request, this was reduced to 2 recommended models. After consultation with parents and staff, the Board adopted the model that recommended the retention of both campuses with the construction of a new residential unit on the Craigmillar Park campus. The Blue Sky Report did not include any financial analysis or calculations.

3.3. Planned Residential Development - Craigmillar Park Campus

3.3.1. Plans were developed for a 3-stage new development. Stage 1 involved building a new residential block on the Craigmillar campus and re-configuring the existing school building with 2 further stages to replace the swimming pool and construct a new building to house the Scottish Braille Press and Royal Blind’s Head Office.

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5 The Terms of Reference for the Strategic Review are set out in Appendix 1.
3.3.2. Stage 1 of the new building project has been given formal planning approval by the City of Edinburgh Council. However, the project is now indefinitely on hold pending the outcome of the Doran Review, an increase in pupil numbers and a significant improvement in economic conditions. At the earliest, construction would commence in the summer of 2013.

3.3.3. The outcome is that more than 5 years after the original Care Commission recommendation, a small number of pupils (5 full-time and 3 part-time) are still resident in the main school building at Craigmillar Park. In recent inspections by the Care Inspectorate, there is no longer an active recommendation that we address the issue of pupils living in the school building. This may be because the Care Inspectorate is aware that we are in the process of planning alternative accommodation. In the meantime, Royal Blind has made significant improvements to both of the off-site residential houses, Drever and the Hostel. Both have had substantial maintenance and repair work carried out in addition to renovating and redecorating both properties. The Care Inspectorate has commented favourably on these improvements.

3.4. Scottish Legislation

3.4.1. All children in Scotland have a statutory right to government-funded education. The Education Act\(^6\) requires that all LA’s must, “in relation to each child and young person having additional support needs for whose school education the authority are responsible, make adequate and efficient provision for such additional support as is required by that child or young person”.

3.4.2. The Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act\(^7\) stipulates that “education be directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential.” It further stipulates that school education provided by an education authority should be provided in a mainstream school unless particular and exceptional circumstances apply\(^8\). Those circumstances include:

- Where a mainstream school would not be suited to the ability or aptitude of the child,

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\(^7\) Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Act (2000)

\(^8\) Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Act (2000)
• Where provision of education to the child in a mainstream school would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education to those with whom the child would be educated and

• Where the placing of the child in a mainstream school would result in unreasonable public expenditure being incurred that would not ordinarily be incurred.

3.4.3. In response to this ‘presumption to mainstream’9, LA’s usually try to accommodate the needs of each learner within mainstream provision in the local area. Where this would not be suited to the ability or aptitude of the child, the LA may place the child in a LA special school or learning support unit, or negotiate an out-of area enrolment in a neighbouring LA, a GAS school, the independent sector or in some combination of these provisions.

3.4.4. While the Scottish Government is responsible for setting the overall direction of policy and the overarching outcomes, the LA’s are responsible for meeting varying local needs and circumstances across Scotland. (Scottish Government, 2012,10) The timing of the Concordat corresponds to the decline in enrolments at the Royal Blind School. This may reflect the fact that LA’s are increasingly seeing it as their responsibility to provide for all learners, as far as possible, within LA provision and are therefore less likely to utilise national schools to meet the needs of specific groups of pupils or individuals with ASN. Also many local authorities had used the opportunities for funding new schools buildings to provide state of the art accommodation for children and young people with complex additional support needs including VI.

3.4.5. Minimising Disability - The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 requires services for children affected by disabilities to ‘minimise the adverse effects of the disability’ and help the children live ‘as normal a life as possible’.

3.4.6. The Code of Practice10 strengthens the importance of parental choice in the educational placement of their child. Many parents express a preference for special schooling where they believe that their children receive individualised instruction by appropriately trained professionals and where there is a high degree of interdisciplinary provision across education, care, therapy and nursing.

3.4.7. Within each LA, parents or a young person can make a placing request for a school other than the local school and, if this is refused, they can take their case to an Appeal Committee. Where a child or young person has a

9 Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Act (2000)

co-ordinated support plan, or the parents are seeking such a plan, and the LA refuses a placing request for a particular school, including a GAS school or independent school, the parents can pursue an appeal through the tribunal system. Some pupils have come to the Royal Blind School as a result of such an appeal.

3.4.8. GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child)\textsuperscript{12} - The GIRFEC model of practice aims to integrate service provision across all sectors and services, providing a seamless, co-ordinated and child-centred approach to service delivery ensuring each child achieves the 8 indicators of wellbeing:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

Each pupil at the Royal Blind School has a Keyworker and a Person-Centred Care Plan. These Care Plans place strong emphasis on the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators.

GIRFEC also places strong emphasis on the achievement of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)\textsuperscript{13} These state that all learners should become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors and
- Responsible citizens.

\textsuperscript{11} Additional Support Needs Tribunals for Scotland.

\textsuperscript{12} Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is Scotland's approach to supporting children and young people. It was launched in 2008. GIRFEC requires that services aimed at children and young people - social work, health, education, police, housing and voluntary organisations - all work together.

\textsuperscript{13} Curriculum for Excellence is fully described at www.educationscotland.org.uk
The Royal Blind School fully implements CfE and visitors to the school frequently comment very favourably on the confidence and success of the pupils.

Photo: A pupil using communication technology to recite a poem at the Burns Day Assembly

3.4.9. The Curriculum for Excellence is the educational framework for all learners aged 3 to 18 in Scotland. The curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life. The curriculum is designed on the basis of the following principles:

- Challenge and enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and choice
- Coherence
- Relevance.
3.5. Royal Blind Strategic Planning

3.5.1. The Strategic Review of the Royal Blind School (2012) takes place in the broad context of Royal Blind business planning. This report takes into consideration a number of other relevant planning documents and quality reports including the:

- School Business Plan 2012-13
- Strategic School Improvement Plan 2011-14
- Standards and Quality Report 2011
- Care Inspectorate Inspection Reports\(^\text{14}\)
- Integrated Inspection Reports of Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate (formerly HMIE and the Care Commission)\(^\text{15}\)

3.5.2. Royal Blind carries out a planning process each year, which sets priorities and strategies for all departments of the organisation. The School Business Plan forms part of the overarching Royal Blind Business Plan.

3.5.3. The Mission and vision of Royal Blind is stated in the School Business Plan 2012-13 and includes the following:

- Royal Blind empowers blind people to fulfil their potential and achieve a brighter future.
- We exist to provide services to blind and partially sighted (visually impaired/VI) children and adults which enable them to live without disadvantage.
- Our vision is that we will make a significant contribution to building a community in which blind and partially sighted people, including those who also have other disabilities, are fully included and lead fulfilling lives. Our contribution will be to provide services of excellent quality which:
  - Empower young people to become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens
  - Enrich education and care provision in all education sectors in Scotland, and beyond, improving the effectiveness of inclusion of visually impaired and multiply disabled pupils and students

\(^\text{14}\) Inspection Reports of the Care Inspectorate can be found at [http://www.scswis.com/index.php](http://www.scswis.com/index.php)

\(^\text{15}\) Integrated Inspection Reports of Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate can be found at [http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=7664&type=2](http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=7664&type=2)
The Royal Blind School is centre of excellence for VI education in Scotland – serving as leading edge, developer, role model and supporter for the VI education and residential care sectors.

We provide expert education of children with visual impairment, with a curriculum tailored to suit the needs of individual pupils in a very good learning and living environment which is also tailored to the needs of our pupils.

The Royal Blind School is ‘Aiming for Excellence’ through providing a safe and enriching environment, where every pupil is valued and supported to become a successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen and effective contributor to society.

3.5.4. Each financial year, Royal Blind submits the School Business Plan to the Scottish Government. The School Business Plan sets out the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats faced by the Royal Blind School. This SWOT analysis is used to decide the business strategies and priorities for the year. The Scottish Government requires the School Business Plan as part of the accountability requirements linked to the receipt of the Scottish Government grant and the approval of Royal Blind School fees by the Scottish Government.

3.5.5. Over the past 3 years, the School Business Plan has focused largely on addressing the decline in pupil numbers and the resulting loss of income. Strategies have included:

- **Marketing the school** to increase both income and pupil enrolments
- **Diversifying the services** the school offers to increase both income and pupil enrolments
- **Making cost savings** where possible, without reducing the service quality

3.5.6. **Marketing the School**: Marketing strategies have achieved excellent media coverage and have developed the School’s profile through electronic media such as the Internet, Facebook and Twitter. While such marketing activity should serve to raise awareness of the work of the Royal Blind School and has contributed to achieving a consistent level of donations even in the midst of recession, they have not resulted in increased pupil enrolments. Several parents who have requested visits to the school have informed school personnel that they first heard of the Royal Blind School through a media article and this prompted them to request a place at the school for their child. However, it is the LA’s who the actual customers are as they fund the pupil placements.

In an endeavour to reach the LA’s an annual Professional’s Open Day was commenced in 2010. This has been well attended on each occasion, but while it has improved awareness of the school and provided CPD for LA staff,
it has not resulted in increased pupil enrolments. Since 2010, the Senior Care team has held an information stand at the annual Community Care Live conference and the SIRCC (Scottish Institute of Residential Child Care) Conference. Education and care staff have held a similar information stand at the AHDS (Association of Heads of Education in Scotland) conference. In all cases, there has been strong interest and the opportunity to talk with many conference delegates. However, again this has not had any observable impact on pupil enrolments.

For a time, there was also a focus on marketing to international communities. International pupils would require full term-time boarding which the School no longer provides. There has been limited interest from international pupils, and the usual expectation is that the education and care would be free of charge. As we no longer provide weekend boarding, this would need to be reviewed if we were to try to attract international pupils. The one international pupil who is currently enrolled has a privately funded nanny to provide care and supervision on weekends and in holiday periods.

3.5.7. **Diversifying Services:** The Royal Blind School has been diversifying its services over the past 2 years in an endeavour to provide a wider range of support services to remove barriers to the education of VI children in Scotland. Royal Blind also proactively seeks to diversify its services as new needs emerge. For instance, the Forward Vision programme was ‘seeded’ in the school, utilising school facilities and school staff. The programme has proved very successful and is meeting an otherwise unmet need. Forward Vision is now operating as a Royal Blind service that is fully independent of the School. This is an excellent outcome for the young adults and their families.

The school has achieved accreditation as a continuing professional development (CPD) provider and has developed some training courses and responded to demands for bespoke training. This is currently operating at a cost-recovery level but has potential for further development in the future. The provision of CPD is consistent with the GASS grant requirement to ‘overcome barriers to learning’ for children with VI by up-skilling the staff who work with them.
Another diversified service is ‘Kidscene’, the new after school club operating on the Canaan lane campus. This is an integrated after-school facility which enrols children without disabilities, some children with ASN from other Edinburgh schools and some children from the Royal Blind school. Kidscene opened in January 2012. It is anticipated it will initially run at a loss until pupil numbers increase. Again, the early success of Kidscene indicates that it is a needed service which provides for the community and for children of the Royal Blind School.
3.5.8. **Making Cost Savings:** As the pupil roll has declined, every effort has been made to make cost savings wherever possible. To this end, a number of staff have changed from full-time to term-time contracts and Senior Residential Care Workers (SRCW's) have participated in a programme of voluntary redundancy. The nursing team has been reduced and reorganised to provide appropriate levels of nursing intervention consistent with pupil numbers. A number of staff transferred to Forward Vision to meet the staffing need of that programme. This had a flow-on effect of reducing the need for redundancies among care staff in the School.

Operational expenditure has been reduced and only essential members of staff have been replaced to cover temporary absence and staff vacancies. However, sufficient numbers of staff need to be maintained to fulfil the aims of the School Business Plan and maintain service capacity.

3.6. **Funding**

3.6.1. The school’s funding comes from three main sources;
- The Scottish Government Grant
- The fees paid by LA's
- Royal Blind (from charitable donations and reserves)

3.6.2. When the Doran Review was announced in 2010, GAS schools were advised that the grant would be protected until after the Doran Review was tabled in Parliament. However, there is no indication of whether the GASS grant will continue in the future.

3.6.3. Currently the fees charged to LA's who place pupils at the Royal Blind School are approved by the Scottish Government although this may well cease to be the case in the near future. Although there has been pressure from LA's to do so, the school does not enter into any negotiations to reduce fees for individual LA's. Owing to the economic situation and in an endeavour to encourage pupil enrolments, the Royal Blind School has not increased its fees since April 2010. In fact the fee for weekend respite care was recently reduced as greater efficiencies have been achieved by ensuring the Respite House is full on each weekend when respite care is offered.

There is a range of fees reflecting differences for day and boarding pupils and for those requiring basic or enhanced support. Occasionally, an individual fee is negotiated for pupils with extremely complex needs who require even higher staffing levels than would normally be provided.
The GASS grant is used to subsidise the placement of Scottish pupils. Thus, pupils from out with Scotland are charged a higher non-subsidised fee.

3.6.4. The GASS grant and LA fees are insufficient to meet the running costs of the Royal Blind School. As pupil numbers have declined, income from fees has reduced substantially. Royal Blind has been subsidising the operational costs of the Royal Blind School for the past several years.

3.7. The Doran Review

3.7.1. In 2010, the Scottish Government announced a review of GAS schools. Peter Doran, retired CEO of Harmeny School was appointed to chair the Review. In its very early stages, the remit of the Review was widened to become a Review of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs. This Review is commonly referred to as the Doran Review. It is due to report its findings to the Scottish parliament in June 2012.

3.7.2. The outcomes arising from the Doran Review will not be known until at least the second half of 2012. However, it is becoming evident that the recommendations of the Doran Review are likely to impact the future role, referral processes and funding mechanisms of the GAS schools. The following are points which may need to be addressed.

- The LA’s will continue to have the power to drive the allocation of pupil places.
- It is unlikely that the role of LA’s as the driver of educational strategy will change.
- There is support for the idea of national resources.
- It is likely that there will be some new initiatives affecting how pupil placements work and how parents are to be involved in placement decisions.
- The future of the GASS grant itself is not clear.

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16 The Review of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs is commonly referred to as the Doran review, after its Chair, Peter Doran.
3.8. Prevalence Data on VI and the Attainment of Pupils with VI

3.8.1. There are 2,593 children and young people in Scotland, for whom visual impairment is the principal factor giving rise to additional support needs.\(^{17}\) This is 2.6% of the total population of school-aged children in Scotland.

3.8.2. In 2007, 0.2% of school leavers in Scotland had VI.\(^{18}\) This figure includes those with both VI and ASN (also referred to as SEN – Special Education Needs). However, there may also be children and young people with VI who have been reported among the 5% reported as having ‘other SEN’. Wide variation in the labelling of pupils with ASN/SEN varies widely, making it somewhat difficult to interpret these data. However, there is an apparent under-representation of pupils with VI among school leavers (those attaining Standard Grade or better qualification).

3.8.3. The Scottish Statistical Bulletin (2009), reports that about 7.48% of Scotland’s pupils with VI attend special schools (p. 38). However, these figures are incomplete as they do not include those attending schools in the independent or GASS sectors.

3.8.4. The Royal Blind School’s projected 2012-13 enrolment of approximately 60 pupils is 2.3% of the estimated population of school-aged children with VI in Scotland. VI is a low-incidence disability and the legislative and social context favours the mainstreaming of children who are VI only. These prevalence data further support the notion of a smaller Royal Blind school accommodating children with VI and ASN. However, the fact that other pupils with VI will be scattered in LA’s throughout Scotland, with varying levels of support, suggests that there is also a future role for the Royal Blind School as a National VI Educational Resource Centre providing various supports to pupils with VI throughout the country.

3.8.5. Attainment: Chanfreau and Cebulla (2009) report that the attainment of school leavers with VI was better than the attainment of those with other SEN. They also reported that school leavers with VI were more likely than those with other SEN to have attended special schools.

3.8.6. Morris and Smith (2008) report that definitions of need and models of service delivery vary markedly among LA’s. It is therefore difficult to draw

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\(^{17}\) Scottish Government. (2012) Supporting children’s and young people’s learning: A report on progress of the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (As amended)

conclusions about the efficacy of different models of support for children with VI and their families.

3.8.7. In 2011, pupils at the Royal Blind School attained a range of qualifications including ASDAN qualifications, and a range of national qualifications at Access and Standard grades. In addition, pupils attained national qualifications at the following levels:

- 12 Intermediate 1
- 4 Intermediate 2
- 8 Highers
- 1 Advanced Higher

These results demonstrate that pupils at the Royal Blind School are being given the necessary opportunities and support to develop their potential and achieve considerable success. Academic successes are complemented by the large number of pupils achieving success in sporting and cultural endeavours. However, while the School has an excellent reputation for the successes of its pupils, this is unlikely to weigh heavily enough to influence away from the current trend towards mainstream placement where many pupils with visual impairment attain well.

3.9. ‘Complex Support Needs’

3.9.1. Peter Doran (2011) provides a very broad definition of ‘complex support needs’. (p. 7) A congenitally blind child could be classified as having complex support needs as could a child who had partial sight and ASN arising from additional disabilities and/or some form of social detriment. He notes that LA’s sometimes need to place children with complex needs out with the LA, in the GASS or independent sector because meeting the needs of some children with complex needs is ‘beyond their capacity’. To what extent various combinations of VI and other ASN falls within the definition of ‘complex support needs’ will be further explored in the review.

3.9.2. The Scottish Government (2012)\(^\text{19}\) states that “For some pupils, whose needs are complex or multiple and who need significant support from more than one agency, a co-ordinated support plan may be required. This is a statutory plan which co-ordinates and records the support to be provided. This plan has specific rights attached to it.” (p. 6, 7) 0.5% of all pupils (3.7% of pupils with SEN) have a CSP.

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\(^\text{19}\) Scottish Government. (2012) Supporting children’s and young people’s learning: A report on progress of the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (As amended)
3.9.3. The Royal Blind School, with its programme of integrated provision across education, care, therapy and nursing, is well placed to meet the needs of pupils with CSP’s.

3.10. Special Schools and Units

3.10.1. Scotland’s LA’s, in 2012, have

- 25 Special Nurseries
- 158 Special Schools
- A range of support services including sensory support services
- 6 residential schools
- secure units

3.10.2. In addition many primary and secondary schools have specialist classes for pupils with specific conditions or multiple difficulties. For example, Darnley Primary School in Glasgow, Knowetop Primary School in Hamilton and Uddingston Grammar School all have specialist provision for pupils with visual impairment.

3.10.3. LA provision is complemented by the following provision in the independent sector

- 36 independent special schools
- 5 day special schools
- 25 residential special schools
- secure services
- 7 grant-aided special schools (Scottish Government, 2012, 14)

The Royal Blind School is the only special school in Scotland catering specifically for children and young people with visual impairment.

3.10.4. Of the 7 Grant Aided Special Schools and independent special schools in Scotland, the ones that report a growing demand are those that cater for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) while those that cater for children with sensory impairment are not being fully utilised. Feedback from LA’s clearly indicated that their first recourse for children with VI would be to place them in local provision.

This may well indicate that there is a need for a national school specialising in the education of children with VI and SEBD and those with VI and ASD.
3.11. International Practice

3.11.1. Internationally, many countries have moved to a model of fully mainstream education. In the USA, the Individuals with Disabilities Act mandates free, appropriate public education for all students with a disability. More specifically in regard to the education of children with VI, many European countries eg Norway, have adopted a model of national resource centres to support the inclusion of children with VI in their local mainstream schools, rather than operating a national school.

Although inclusion of pupils with VI is the national policy of each of the following countries, Finland, Sweden, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Slovenia and Norway, each has a government-funded national resource centre for pupils with VI. Some have a combined school and resource centre and some a resource centre only. Some countries have combined services for hearing impairment (HI) with VI to establish national sensory resource centres. This indicates that there is an international precedent which might usefully be adopted in Scotland, by developing a national school and resource centre for VI, alone or as part of a combined VI / HI national sensory resource centre.

3.11.2. Where special schools continue to exist, they generally enrol children with a variety of severe and complex disabilities. It is evident that there is a trend to more generic provision in special education. This is illustrated by the increasing number of special schools that enrol children with a wide range of disabilities rather than specialising in one area of ASN such as VI. There are many schools for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). This would cover a vast range of disabilities including multiple disabilities and visual impairment (MDVI). However, in PMLD provision, there is generally no specific emphasis on the VI component of the disabling conditions.

3.11.3. Post-graduate teacher training too is becoming increasingly generic with a large number of ‘core’ modules being common to all special education postgraduate courses. Most of these courses include modules on inclusive education. In Scotland, the postgraduate course for teachers of VI no longer requires its students to become proficient in grade II Braille. Some experienced special education professionals report their belief that this will reduce the body of knowledge and expertise that is essential to providing high quality education to learners with VI.

3.11.4. In England, there are several schools for the VI, including the RNIB Pears Centre, the West of England School, Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford, and New College Worcester. Each of these
caters largely for children with MDVI in the school and has developed senior phase and college programmes for learners aged over 16, a range of outreach services and other services such as adults' programmes, vocational training, residential and respite care and family support services. The West of England School has reported recent growth in pupil numbers and provides peripatetic VI teaching services to the adjoining LA’s.

3.11.5. International models demonstrate how national VI schools can be well utilised as National VI Educational Resource Centres providing services such as: assessment, resources, continuing professional development (CPD), young adult, further education and transition programmes.

3.12. Literature Review

3.12.1. Much of the literature over the past three decades has strongly supported the notion of mainstream education for children with additional support needs. In the UK the Warnock Report\(^\text{20}\) argued strongly for inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools and this position guided the development of the UK’s education policy for the next several decades. The philosophy of inclusion is based on the social and philosophical stance that people with disabilities should be included in mainstream society and that they have the right to equal access to generic community services in all areas of life including education. This inclusive approach to education resulted in:

- More children with disabilities being educated in the mainstream,
- More support services being provided to enable children with disabilities to live at home with their families,
- Changes to teacher training to enable all teachers to accommodate the learning needs of a diverse range of pupils,
- More interdisciplinary working in schools with the introduction of care workers, support staff and allied health professionals into the staffing of schools,
- Legislation to ensure access to the physical environment, resources and information
- Development of inclusive curricula.

3.12.2. However, in 2005, Warnock issued a brochure which was critical of the way in which aspects of inclusion had been implemented. In 2011\(^{21}\), she said:

**“Special schools... should be small, appropriate specialist schools where children could learn and truly experience a feeling of belonging.... Inclusive education should not mean being educated ‘under the same roof’, as the current ideology has it, but should instead consist in ‘being involved in a common enterprise of learning’ wherever one can learn best”**.

3.12.3. Saunders (1994) claims that many parents choose a residential special school because of lack of local services and family support, the availability of a 24 hour curriculum and a social peer group.

3.12.4. Gray (2010) noted that “pupils with VI were amongst the lowest achievers.... The proportion of pupils with a VI leaving school with no qualifications was higher than for any other type of ASN.... Fewer than 25% of all young adults with a VI were found to be in employment.” (p. 69, 70) However, Gray’s findings also demonstrated that “those who experienced a mainstream education disliked school more and had fewer friends at school than their peers at special school,” although “neither group enjoyed an active social life nor did they report having many friends at home.” (p. 68).

3.12.5. Doran (2011, 14) states that some people consider the current funding model of service provision to children with complex needs is ‘lacking in evidence of effectiveness’.

The Royal Blind School is a member of Educating Through Care Scotland (ETCS) and in that context, is working with LA’s to develop an Outcomes Framework to demonstrate the additional benefits that pupils derive from attending a residential special school.

3.12.6. Simmons and Bayliss (2007) also call for a reappraisal of the established view that special schools provide the best learning environment for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). However, Darrow (2009) identifies three areas that continue to place barriers in the way of successful inclusion. She categorises these as organisational, attitudinal and knowledge barriers. Baker (2007) supports the notion that there is a place for special schools for

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children with the most severe and complex SEN and to provide outreach support to children with SEN in mainstream schools.

Conroy (2008) claims that although well-intentioned, the practice of providing 1 to 1 assistance in mainstream schools can have an adverse effect on the education and social independence of pupils.

3.12.7. Mitchell (2010) reports that:

- In the UK, Warnock (2005) encouraged special schools to become ‘specialist schools’, offering services to a broader section of the school population.
- The New South Wales Public Education Inquiry (2002) encouraged special schools to form linkages with regular schools, suggesting that teachers in special schools could accept roles as co-ordinators to assist regular schools with inclusion, sharing resources and their expertise with teachers and assistants and providing outreach services.
- Innovative practices documented by Farrell (2008) and by Gibb (2007) included suggestions that ‘exemplary special schools’ could share best practice in:
  - teaching multi-age and diverse classes,
  - mentoring and working collaboratively with regular schools,
  - training teachers and assistants how to differentiate work,
  - teaching specific skills to students individually and in groups,
  - developing individual learning and behavioural programmes,
  - providing outreach services to support the integration, transition or the enrolment of students with disabilities through information on the student or the impact of the disability on the student’s capacity to learn,
  - developing individual programmes for students,
  - assessing students for assistive technology,
  - screening the speech and language of students,
  - establishing new special units in regular schools,
  - organising parent information sessions, IEP meetings and visits from professionals to support their mainstream colleagues,
  - offering specialist college-level vocational courses on car repairs, hospitality, building, sport and gardening to students and adults after school hours
  - offering short-term placements to students to develop an effective behaviour management programme, with ongoing support when the student returns to the regular school.
These exemplars could be used to guide the future role of the Royal Blind School.

3.12.8. The debate continues about mainstreaming, integration, inclusion and special schools. However, there is sufficient evidence to support the continuation of the provision of special schools as one of the range of options available to children and young people with disabilities. (Nalavany, Caraway & Brown, 2011). This notion supports the view that there is a legitimate place for the Royal Blind School in the future provision of education to learners with VI in Scotland.

3.12.9. Mitchell (2010) noted a trend in European countries in which special schools and institutes were being transformed into resource centres, with such functions as (a) training teachers and other professionals, (b) developing and disseminating materials and methods (c) supporting mainstream schools and parents, (d) providing short term or part-time help for individual students, and (e) supporting students to enter the labour market.

3.12.10. Partnerships with parents and parent-organisations are also supported in the literature, Nutting et. al. (2006) who suggest that engaging parents in their child’s education will improve the effectiveness of schooling, especially programmes for pupils with disabilities.

3.12.11. A number of authors refer to the tensions in educating children and young people with ASN. For instance, Lawson, Waite & Robertson (2005), in discussing educational programmes for learners aged 14 to 19 years refer to the tension between providing a broad, balanced curriculum, while at the same time responding to individual needs and preferences, and the tension between providing continuity of learning while needing to introduce change in order to increase pupils’ autonomy and independence as they move beyond school. At the Royal Blind School, high priority is given to developing independent living skills and transition preparation. These must continue to be key focus points for the school in the future.

3.12.12. Douglas, et. al. (2011) discuss the importance for VI learners of access to printed materials and to the curriculum. They refer to the tension between providing children with access to information in their preferred medium, and teaching children ‘access skills’ including the use of technology. While both approaches are important, learning how to access information provides the better long-term benefits. In determining the future for the Royal Blind School, it is important to consider the broader educational needs of VI pupils and the importance of being able to competently use technology to access learning and information.
3.12.13. Conclusions from the Literature

While there continues to be much debate about the merit of special schools in an environment where government policy clearly favours mainstreaming, there is sufficient evidence to show that special schools continue to play an important role in the range of educational provision available to pupils with disabilities. Specifically, there is an identified need for special schools to provide education to pupils with the most complex needs and to provide outreach and assessment services. Doran (2011) notes that LA’s sometimes need to place children with complex needs out with the LA, in the GASS or independent sector because meeting the needs of some children with complex needs is ‘beyond their capacity’. For pupils with VI, the special school environment is one in which there is substantial expertise in the teaching of VI-specific skills such as using assistive technology, alternative formats (Braille, large print, Moon, audio and e-books), orientation and mobility and independent living skills. These skills are integrated into the ever-day learning experience at the Royal Blind School.

3.12.14. In terms of determining the future role of the Royal Blind School as a National VI Educational Resource Centre, a research role in partnership with a university and the Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC), the Communication, Access, Literacy, Learning (CALL) Centre, RNIB and SENSE Scotland (a national organisation for people who are deaf-blind) could be the way forward. Arthur-Kelly et. al. (2008) call for further research into the needs of pupils with PMLD.

Photo: A pupil closely inspecting a guitar during a music lesson
4. Findings from Consultations with Key Stakeholders

4.1. Surveys (Local Authorities)

4.1.1. See 2.2.1 for methodology. The survey return rates were:\(^{22}\)

- 30 out of 37* Local Authorities responded. That is a return rate of 81%.
- (*37 LA’s = 32 Scotland, 1 Northern Ireland, 4 England)
- The return rate for Scotland was 78% (25 out of 32).
- The return rate for LA’s who currently have pupils enrolled at the Royal Blind School was 78% (18 out of 23).
- 5 of the 7 Local Authorities that did not respond have pupils currently placed at the school.

The overall return rate was excellent and exceeded expectations. Therefore, the results from this survey can be seen as having high validity.

4.1.2. The full detail of survey responses can be found in Appendix 3. From the responses received:

- Across all LA’s, the estimate is that there will be 16 referrals over the next 5 years (an average of 3.2 per annum). However, many LA’s acknowledge that this may change as new individuals emerge and/or needs change. When taken together with current enrolment trends and the probability that there will be additional enrolments resulting from pupils moving between LA’s, ASN Tribunal decisions, and privately funded pupils, the projected pupil enrolment has been based on annual intake of 5 pupils.

- There is a fairly even split between anticipated age of pupils who might be referred with LA’s indicating that the most likely age of pupils referred to be secondary (14) and Primary (11). However, our experience shows that enrolments are skewed towards older pupils. Therefore we expect that any primary pupils are likely to be in upper primary.

- The type of VI pupil who might be referred is also fairly evenly split between MDVI (13), VI&ASN (10) and Braille using pupil with no additional ASN (10)

However, it should be noted that there are many different interpretations of what constitutes MDVI and VI&ASN. See 4.5.5.

- The main reasons that LA’s give for not referring pupils to RBS are:
  - Local facilities are adequate to meet the need (27)

\(^{22}\) The details of returned LA surveys appears in Appendix 6.
Perceptions of what the Royal Blind School can offer were very mixed, but the 5 main identified strengths were:

- Reputation and history
- Well qualified and experienced teachers in VI
- Appropriate environment and resources for VI
- VI-specific training such as mobility, independent living skills and Grade 2 Braille
- Provision of integrated programmes of education, care, therapy and nursing

In the past, the Royal Blind School has been utilised as a national special school for all children with VI. The surveys indicate that this has changed and that children with VI only are most likely to be educated in the mainstream, while those with MDVI are likely to be enrolled in some form of special education setting in or near the local area. It is clear then, that most LA’s anticipate that in the foreseeable future, they will be referring fewer children to the Royal Blind School than they have done in the past, and that those pupils are most likely to be those with ASN over and above their VI. As the LA’s have the authority to make these placing decisions, and based on their survey feedback, it seems inevitable that future enrolments at the Royal Blind School will stabilise at about 5 per year, that the majority of pupils will have VI and ASN and that they will be older pupils, from upper primary through to the senior phase of secondary school.

4.2. Surveys (Staff)

4.2.1. See 2.2.2 for the methodology. Surveys were distributed by email to all school staff (education, care, nursing, therapy and ancillary staff). The full detail of survey responses can be found in Appendix 4.

4.2.2. Surveys were distributed by email to all school staff (education, care, nursing, therapy and ancillary staff).

164 staff surveys were issued and 46 returned, a return rate of 28%. Responses were received from:

- 21 education staff
- 11 care staff
- therapy staff
- 3 other staff
• anonymous responses
• 0 facilities staff
• 0 domestic staff

This was a disappointing return rate but might be explained because there is a high level of consultation with education and care staff through meetings, monitoring and evaluation, supervision, appraisal and professional review and development. Education and Care staff may feel that they had already adequately expressed their views through such forums and chose not to reiterate their views through a survey. Administrative, Facilities and Domestic staff were also given the opportunity to respond but chose not to do so. Very often, staff in these categories feel that their role is to support the work of the school but not to influence its direction.

4.2.3. Responses were very varied. However, the following trends did emerge:

• There was broad agreement that the Royal Blind School has many strengths.

• There was broad agreement that the perceived main reasons for LA’s being reluctant to place pupils at the Royal Blind School are:
  o Legislated presumption to mainstream
  o Cost of the fees at the Royal Blind School
  o LA belief that they have adequate facilities to accommodate VI learners
  o The belief that young children should be educated in their home area

4.2.4. In regard to additional service the Royal Blind School could / should offer, the majority of staff respondents felt that:

• 52 week a year care is not financially viable and is not desirable as young people need time at home with their families.

• Respite care on all weekends is not financially viable and is not desirable as young people need time at home with their families.

• There was a mixed response regarding holiday programmes, family activities and weekend activities. Some felt that these would assist families. Others felt they would put a strain on the time that families should spend together. Given the geographic spread of families, many staff felt that travel constraints would prevent many parents and families from participating. Others felt that while these might be desirable, they would be too costly to run and too difficult to staff.

• There was broad agreement on the need for training for parents to ensure consistency for the young people, but some staff acknowledged
that due to the geographic spread of parents, this could be difficult to achieve.

- Most staff felt that the existing ‘Prep’ arrangements were adequate and there was no need for after-school tutoring.
- There was a high level of agreement that the provision of training in Braille, Mobility and Independent Living Skills would be valuable in building independence and utilizing the school’s considerable expertise.

4.2.5. There were numerous ideas to reduce the cost of providing services. However, those that were most commonly mentioned were:

- Consolidate to one campus
- Reduce the number of staff in promoted posts
- Charge staff for morning teas and lunches
- Rent out surplus facilities
- Reduce the wastage of food at lunch time
- Reduce the use of paper, and wastage in terms of heating and lighting
- Reduce overall staffing by reviewing the best mix of care and education support staff

These cost-saving ideas will be considered by management over the coming months and instituted where they would be practical and effective.

4.2.6. Several staff noted that ‘you get what you pay for’. The only way they see to reduce costs is to reduce services and this would be to the detriment of our pupils and the service itself. The staff comprised of practitioners who are constantly striving for excellence. It is not surprising then that they would strongly oppose any perceived reduction in the quality of services.

To ensure that the Royal Blind School continues to provide high quality, specialised education and care to pupils with VI, it is crucial to preserve high staff:pupil ratios, highly individualised programmes and high levels of personalisation and choice across a broad range of curricular choices. It is also essential to preserve the input of multi-disciplinary teams by maintaining a mix of staff across education, care, therapy, habilitation and nursing.

4.2.7. When asked to describe what the school might look like in 5 years’ time, there was considerable diversity of opinion. However, many staff mentioned:

- A full age range of pupils of mixed abilities.
- Some staff suggested that we should broaden our intake criteria to enroll pupils other than those with VI.
However, given the LA survey responses, it is unlikely that the school will return to a full range of pupils of mixed abilities. As discussed elsewhere, it is unlikely that we will receive future referrals for younger children, those who have VI only and those with MDVI.

4.2.8. Other issues and ideas raised by staff included:

- The desire to reinstate nursery services
- The need for parent / family accommodation
- The need for a pupil / family counselor
- Childcare provision for staff to reduce absenteeism resulting from childcare difficulties
- Provision of specialised VI training and support to LA’s, individuals with VI and their families
- Provision of a national VI resource base
- Provision of a national Habilitation centre
- Extension of adult services
- Improved collaboration with LA’s and families
- An increase in the number of part-time placements and more partnership working with mainstream schools
- Provision of an extended school day with enrichment activities
- Develop and promote expertise in niche areas such as VI plus ASD or VI plus ESBD. (This would require significant staff training.)

The staff is rightfully proud of the School and what it has achieved for many pupils over the years. While they would like to see the school return to the full enrolment of 120 pupils of mixed abilities, most realize that this is highly unlikely and that we have to change our staffing and practices to reflect current and future needs. They presented many ideas for diversification of both Royal Blind School and Royal Blind services which can be used to inform future development. However in general, the staff, other than promoted staff is unaware of the funding arrangements and what range of diversified functions LA funding is likely to sustain.

4.3. Surveys (Parents)

4.3.1. See 2.2.3 for methodology. Of the 68 parents’ surveys distributed, 6 were returned. This represents a return rate of 9%. This was a disappointing return rate but is consistent with the school’s experience of seeking parental opinion. In informal discussions with staff and at Educational Review meetings, parents often report to school staff that they are happy to
have their child placed at the school and are happy with the service their child is receiving. However, they don’t feel that they are able to comment on broad structural or policy issues, only those matters that directly and immediately affect their own child. The full detail of responses to the survey can be found in Appendix 5.

4.3.2. There was unanimous agreement on what were important considerations for enrolling their child at the Royal Blind School:

- Reputation and history
- Meeting individual needs
- Well qualified and experienced teachers
- Appropriate environment and resources for VI
- A range of VI specific training (eg: mobility and independent living skills)

The considerations graded as less important were:

- The expertise to teach grade 2 Braille
- Strong links with universities for research and training
- MDVI expertise such as Canaan-Barrie signing

4.3.3. As would be expected from parents whose children have been referred to the Royal Blind School, parental perceptions of reasons for the LAs’ reluctance to refer pupils to the Royal Blind School were very mixed and no clear trends emerged from their responses.
4.3.4. The additional services desired by families:

Four of six respondents wanted:

- Family activities
- After School tutoring
- Intensive training in mobility
- More independent living skills training
- More young adult programmes

Three of six respondents wanted:

- Holiday programmes
- Training for parents

It is unclear whether they would be aware of what range or level of such services they would receive if their child was enrolled elsewhere.

4.3.5. Several respondents spoke favourably of the Royal Blind School providing what their child needed. In particular they mentioned individualized education, development of independence and inclusion in a peer group.

Some respondents also noted that they would value programmes for siblings, and higher levels of cooperative working between families and the school.

Owing to the small number of parent responses, conclusions drawn from them are tentative. However, in general feedback from parents, out with the context of this review, indicates a high level of parental satisfaction and a desire for even more services if they were available. Parents, understandably, tend to evaluate services on how well they meet the individual needs of their child. From the survey, the characteristics of the school that were identified as being important considerations in placing their children at the school have been considered when evaluating alternative strategies for future service provision.

4.4. Interviews

4.4.1. In general, there was agreement as to the high value of the Royal Blind School and acknowledgement that it fills an important role in educating those pupils for whom mainstream or local provision has not been successful.

4.4.2. School staff, LA staff and the CEO’s of other GAS schools who were interviewed felt that there was a real need for the Royal Blind School to fulfil a role as a national resource centre for VI. However, education staff in particular felt that the expertise required to fulfil this role could only be
maintained if they continued to work with pupils with VI on a regular basis in a school setting.

4.4.3. School staff expressed that early intervention is of vital importance and Royal Blind School staff have excellent skills to deliver this.

4.4.4. Martin Vallely from Edinburgh City Council, which also provides services to the Lothians, reported that Edinburgh City Council has developed 3 special nurseries to meet the needs of young learners with VI. He also stated that the LA has developed a range of services to meet its legislative remit to educate all learners from within the LA. He acknowledged the good work that the Royal Blind School does and is not averse to partnership working if the opportunity arises. However, he indicated that he Edinburgh City Council would be highly unlikely to refer any children to us unless

- The law is changed
- Funding is changed
- We offer them a fee deal that is “so good that they would close one of their own schools and send all the pupils to the Royal Blind School”!

Martin surmised that some past Royal Blind School enrolments may have resulted from the closure of other schools and the need to re-house existing pupils. He said that the 2004 Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act and the 2007 Concordat between Scottish Government and the LA’s had strengthened the obligation upon to LA’s to take responsibility for educating all pupils within their local area. To this end, Edinburgh City Council had made significant investment in building education infrastructure and services. Prior to 2004, LA’s were much more likely to utilise GASS sector schools and other national schools. He said “we used to think of the Royal Blind School as just another one of our own local schools”.

He sees the future role of the Royal Blind School as being a National VI Educational Resource Centre funded by the Scottish Government.

4.4.5. Many LA’s are providing appropriate services for their VI pupils. This view was corroborated in interviews with Martin Vallely from Edinburgh City Council, Dominic Everett from RNIB, Janis Sugden from the Scottish Sensory Centre and NHS therapy staff who work across a range of schools. However, interviews with parents and representatives of for Scotland’s Disabled Children (fSDC) indicate that there are a number of pupils who experience failure, isolation, low self-esteem and bullying in the mainstream.

4.4.6. Lorna Walker, former HMIE Inspector and now Administrator at Educating Through care Scotland (ETCS) also sees the future role of the Royal Blind School as a National VI Educational Resource Centre providing a national Advice/ Helpline, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Centre,
Assessment Service, Evaluative Service to assist LA’s in their provision of VI services, VI Awareness training, specialist support in VI technology and habilitation.

4.4.7. Royal Blind School Mobility Specialist, Angie Bisson recommends a future role for the Royal Blind School as a National habilitation Centre with a strong emphasis on training Habilitation Specialists.

4.4.8. NHS Therapists working at the Royal Blind School Mary Siggs and Monika Vest noted the growing need for therapeutic intervention for the population of pupils with VI and ASN.

4.4.9. Royal Blind School Nurses, Frances Murray and Eilidh Burgess commented favourably on the integration of care and nursing teams to provide holistic care to the pupils.

4.4.10. Royal Blind School staff report that peripatetic teachers in various LA’s have been instructed not to inform parents about the Royal Blind School. They report feeling frustrated at not being able to give the parents full information about the range of services available.

4.4.11. The DHT, Outreach at the Royal Blind School reports that the requests we receive from VI support teachers in LA’s usually relate to the need for upskilling in functional visual assessment, teaching Braille (especially Grade 2 Braille) and developing meaningful programmes for children with MDVI, especially in terms of establishing communication.

4.4.12. David Thompson from the Scottish Government Support and Wellbeing Unit strongly encourages partnership working among the GAS schools. Interviews with the CEO’s of Harmeny and Donaldson’s schools revealed a high level of enthusiasm to work in partnership on CPD and the ETCS Outcomes Project.

4.4.13. Jamie Fitchie, a former pupil who had attended both a mainstream school and the Royal Blind School said: “There have been really good things about both kinds of school. I enjoyed having a large number of other kids around me in mainstream so I had a lot of friends but I was bullied too and I didn’t always get my work in accessible formats on time so I wasn’t doing very well in school. At the Blind School, I get all my work in accessible format; I have lots of friends and I feel like I really belong. My confidence has grown enormously.”

4.4.14. Current pupils expressed that they enjoy attending the Royal Blind School and have friends. They enjoy the range of subjects and appreciate how the work is individualised for them and presented in accessible formats. They especially enjoy the opportunity to be included in performances (eg: the Christmas Show) and sporting teams (eg: the Kielder Challenge and
Worcester Gala). They enjoy being an Eco School and looking after the environment.

4.4.15. Interviews with pupils of the Royal Blind School indicate that they feel happy and confident, and enjoy the friendship of their peers at school. Several former pupils who have gone on to College report that these friendships continue into adult life. However, some pupils who return to their local area and who do not participate in College programmes or secure employment, report loneliness and boredom in their young adult lives. The attainment and achievement of pupils at the Royal Blind School are significant with many pupils attaining national qualifications from Access to Advanced Higher level.

4.4.16. The parent representatives from for Scotland’s Disabled Children (fSDC) reported that many parents do not achieve the educational placements they want for their children because the placement system is too adversarial and many parents feel they are unable to enter into the Tribunal system. Both have children successfully placed in GAS schools.

4.4.17. Janice MacNeill, CEO of Donaldson’s School for the Deaf (the other GAS school for children with sensory impairment) also reports falling pupil numbers and the need to diversify programmes beyond school. Specifically, Donaldson’s has developed a young adults’ programme, a vocational training senior phase and a nursery for children without disabilities. They also rent their facilities out for conferences and meetings. This part of their programme is called ‘Campus’.

4.4.18. Neil Squires, CEO of Harmeny, a GAS school for children with SEBD reports full enrolments.

4.4.19. A variety of stakeholders have been interviewed and correspondingly a diverse array of views and priorities have been expressed. However, there is general agreement on the high quality of programmes delivered by the Royal Blind School. Equally, though, there is an acceptance that providing quality programmes is unlikely to change enrolment trends away from mainstream or local area enrolment. There is strong agreement that the Royal Blind School has a future role to play as a National VI Educational Resource Centre, using its expertise to support pupils with VI all over Scotland, irrespective of whether they are enrolled at the school or not.
4.5. Referral Trends and Influences

4.5.1. The enrolment statistics at the Royal Blind School over the past five years, corroborated by the feedback from the LA surveys and interviews reported in earlier sections, are indicative of future enrolment trends. LA’s are telling us that they are likely to continue placing small numbers of pupils at the Royal Blind School in the future, and that these pupils are likely to be of upper primary age or older, with VI and ASN. There are several ages at which referral is most likely: upper primary (P5), the beginning of secondary school (S1) or the beginning of the senior phase (S4). Given the interview feedback from Edinburgh City Council, it is likely that a significant proportion of our pupils will be from more distant LA’s and are therefore likely to be residential to some extent. This, combined with current enrolment statistics indicates that approximately 50% of pupils in the future will be residential.

4.5.2. LA feedback indicates that they see the Royal Blind School as a Safety Net for the small number of pupils whose needs cannot be met locally without assistance. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that we can change this projected pattern of future enrolment through advertising, or other marketing strategies.
4.5.3. New enrolments over the past 5 years have been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Craigmillar Park</th>
<th>Canaan Lane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inward referrals at Craigmillar Park have remained fairly stable over the past 5 years and we can reasonably expect that these patterns will continue for the long-term. Pupils with multiple disabilities and visual impairment enroll at the Canaan lane campus. New enrolments of learners with MDVI have reduced to zero. It is not expected that there will be a continuation of new MDVI enrolments as LA’s generally place such pupils in local area provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

4.5.4. Of the 27 new enrolments at Craigmillar Park over the past 5 years, 7 had VI only and 20 had VI and ASN. The proportion of new enrolments with VI and ASN has increased each year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># VI only</th>
<th># VI and ASN</th>
<th>% VI and ASN of total new enrolments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.5. There are many different interpretations of what constitutes MDVI and VI&ASN. Current enrolment trends indicate that we are less likely to receive enrolments of children who have MDVI: children with multiple, complex disabilities including cognitive impairment, physical impairment and health conditions. These pupils are more likely to be enrolled in LA facilities for children with Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). At the Royal Blind School, strong emphasis is placed on the VI component of the disabling conditions because vision is the primary sense for learning.
However, this view is not universally shared. Current enrolment trends indicate that pupils with VI and ASN such as social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are the ones who are more likely to be referred to the Royal Blind School in the future. In some LA’s, such children might be labeled as MDVI.

4.5.6. Future pupil numbers have been projected based on:
- Extrapolation of pupil enrolments from the current pupil roll
- Trends relating to age at enrolment, disability type and boarding status
- Feedback from Local Authorities

4.5.7. It is expected that new pupil referrals will be low, about 5 per year. LA Survey responses indicated that there will be an average of 3.2 new referrals per year. One LA survey response stated that:

‘We would see RBS as supporting the ‘one-offs’ which even an excellent VI service like ours cannot deal with.’

4.5.8. Based on historical trends, it is probable that in addition to pupils placed by the LA’s, there will be a small number of pupils who enrol at the school as the result of a Tribunal decision and a small number who will be privately funded.

4.5.9. Survey responses indicated that LA’s are reluctant to refer young pupils to a national school because it is thought better that they live at home with their families and participate in the local community. Thus it is expected that pupils will be predominantly in the secondary school with a small number in upper primary.

4.5.10. Given the trend to include most learners with VI in local mainstream schools, the long-term role for the Royal Blind School will be to enrol the small number of children with VI whose complex needs cannot be met by the Local Authority (LA). The Royal Blind School will be smaller than at present. Most of the pupils will have VI and additional support needs (ASN).

4.6. Pupil Projection

4.6.1. Considering current enrolment trends, pupil projections and information received through surveys and interviews, pupil numbers were projected on the following assumptions:
- The existing pupils will remain at the school to complete their education at the Royal Blind School
- There will be 5 new enrolments each year
• Of these, 1 is referred in Primary 5 (P5), 2 in Secondary 1 (S1) and 2 in Secondary 5 (S5)

• Approximately half the new enrolments will be residential and half will be day pupils

• All new enrolments will be pupils with VI and ASN.

4.6.2. The implication of these assumptions is that we ultimately reach a stable pupil roll of 25 pupils. Of these it is anticipated that approximately 50% will be residential to some degree. It is expected that pupils will have VI and ASN, possibly with a small number of pupils at any one time with MDVI. The age distribution of the pupils will typically be as represented in the table below. This is the profile I will take forward as ‘the long-term school.’ This projected pupil population is still some years away, probably around 2020-21. The projections and required transition arrangements that apply between the present and the long-term roll are described in chapter 7.

4.6.3. The assumptions underpinning the projected long-term school are robust, being supported by our experience of current and recent enrolment trends and corroborated by feedback from the Local Authorities. There is a small chance that the Doran Review may propose significant changes to educational provision of for children with complex additional support needs, referral mechanisms and/or funding arrangements. The recommendations of this Strategic Review must be considered in light of any such changes arising from the recommendations of the Doran Review. At this time however, sweeping change seems unlikely. Peter Doran has indicated in a meeting at the Royal Blind School, that there continues to be support for a national special education provision for children with complex additional support needs.

4.6.4. The long-term projected pupil roll:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>P5</th>
<th>P6</th>
<th>P7</th>
<th>S1</th>
<th>S2</th>
<th>S3</th>
<th>S4</th>
<th>S5</th>
<th>S6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7. Critical Mass

4.7.1. With these projected pupil numbers, it is worth asking whether there is there a ‘critical mass’ at which it becomes unviable to continue to run the Royal Blind School? This question can be considered from educational, social and financial perspectives.

4.7.2. From the educational perspective, the individualised nature of the educational intervention enables the individual educational needs of each pupil to be met, irrespective of the size of the pupil roll. However, providing this individualised education would require more specialist teachers than could be funded by the fees received from a small number of pupils. It would be useful therefore to develop opportunities for learning through partnerships with a mainstream school/s.

4.7.3. From a social perspective, there is a concern that if pupil numbers drop too low, it becomes difficult to provide peer group interactions, educational discussion and debate, and most importantly, friendships for the pupils. Opinions vary as to what this socially-defined ‘critical mass’ is, but in the event that the pupil roll should drop to less than 20, the future viability of the school should again be reviewed. Again, entering into partnerships with a mainstream school/s to provide learning and teaching opportunities as well as social interaction for the pupils, supported by the specialist interventions
of the skilled and experienced staff of the Royal Blind School, would be a useful strategy for the future.

4.7.4. Financial viability is a little easier to determine. The smaller the number of enrolled pupils, the smaller the amount of income from fees. However, infrastructure costs (overheads) would not decrease at the same rate as the decline in pupil numbers. Therefore, to continue to provide the same level of service for a small pupil population, the cost per pupil would increase.

4.7.5. A number of other independent special schools have similarly small pupil rolls:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupil Roll</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupil Roll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Troup House</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hillside</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore House</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Harmeny</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falkland House</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>The New School</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craighalbert</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Corseford</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanmore House</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>New Struan</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starley Hall</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This demonstrates that it is viable to operate a school with low pupil numbers, as long as programme quality, staffing levels, overhead costs and pupil fees are carefully planned and balanced.

Photo: pupils cooking with Chef: Tony Singh, during Braille Week 2012
5. Current Service Delivery Strategies

5.1. A Range of Flexible Services

5.1.1. The staff and management of the Royal Blind School constantly reflect on its practice and the changing needs of its pupils, their families and the LA’s. As a result, the range of service delivery strategies currently in place, are flexible and responsive to pupils’ needs and to the developments in Scottish education, including Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and the emerging National Qualifications Framework. In looking to the future, it is important to maintain this level of reflective and responsive practice, facilitating a flexible range of service delivery strategies to meet the diverse needs of VI learners.

5.1.2. The Royal Blind School currently delivers the following range of flexible service delivery models:

- Shared enrolments where a pupil attends the Royal Blind School for between 2 and 4 days per week while attending the local school on the remaining days of the week. This model enables the delivery of specialised VI education at the same time as maintaining peer and community contacts in the pupil’s home area.

- Transition arrangements to facilitate pupil movement into and out of the school. Transition occurs at key stages throughout a young person’s life: from home to school, primary to secondary, and school to college. For pupils of the Royal Blind School an additional transition occurs when the young person moves into the Royal Blind School from their current school. Residential pupils also require support to move from their family home into school boarding. Transition is characterised by close collaborative liaison with the services from which and to which the pupil is transitioning. Because transitions impact the whole family, Care staff often work with not only the pupil, but also the parents, carers and siblings to prepare for the changes that will result from the new educational/vocational placement. Transitions often involve part-time attendance at both the existing and new services, with time in the new service gradually being increased until a full transition is achieved. Staff members from the Royal Blind School provide support to the pupil in the new environment until they are well settled and successful support strategies are in place in the new service. A range of staff is involved in transition planning; administrative staff liaise regarding the transfer of pupil information, mobility staff prepare the pupil for the new service in terms of independent mobility, educators and carers exchange relevant information and plans are put in place for providing required technology and other learning resources, to ensure that the transition occurs successfully.
• Taster weeks in which young people who are enrolled at schools other than the Royal Blind School, can attend the school, as a day or boarding pupil to participate in the full school programme, experiencing a range of specialist teaching and interventions to support skills related specifically to their VI such as Braille, mobility, independent living and the use of assistive technology, and meeting other VI peers.

• Short-term enrolments for the purposes of assessment or intensive intervention in VI specific skill such as mobility, Braille, assistive technology or independent living skills.

• Shared School/College placements in which the pupil attends the Royal Blind School on a part-time basis while also attending a college or another school part-time. In such situations, there is close collaboration between the two educational facilities to ensure consistency and coherence for the young person.

5.1.3. This flexibility would remain as a key feature of the school in the long-term.

5.2. A Flexible Curriculum

5.2.1. As the pupil population at the Royal Blind School has changed, an increasingly diverse range of curricula has been offered. The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is provided from Primary 1 to Secondary 6. CfE requires delivery of a broad general education up to S3, followed by a Senior Phase.

5.2.2. Currently there are pupils enrolled who are highly academic and are studying a diverse curricular range up to Advanced Higher level. However, an increasing proportion of the pupil population is comprised of pupils with VI and ASN. They are more likely to study at Standard and Intermediate (the new National 4 and National 5) levels. Pupils with MDVI tend to learn at early level with accreditation through frameworks such as Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

5.2.3. In all educational stages, there is strong emphasis on developing skills that address the barriers to successful education, imposed by VI. These skills include orientation and mobility, independent living skills, use of assistive technology and literacy skills in alternative formats (eg: Braille, Moon, large print, audio) as required.

5.2.4. Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing is integrated across all curricular areas. Interdisciplinary learning is facilitated wherever possible through project and theme work and team-teaching.

5.2.5. There is strong emphasis on the importance of the senior phase (S4-S6) when pupils have the option to participate in an individually designed programme incorporating the academic curriculum together with vocational and independent living skills designed to consolidate functional skills for
community living. The Senior Phase includes part-time work experience and college placements as appropriate to each individual’s goals.

5.2.6. There is a high level of cooperation between Education and Care staff to ensure that learning is coherent and relevant to each pupil. Form teachers and Keyworkers work together to develop and integrated Individualised Educational Programme (IEP) and Care Plan for each pupil.

- All pupils have opportunities for personal achievement through developing their personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.
- Their education helps them to overcome their barriers to learning and realise their potential.
- Pupils receive a broad, general education in P1-S3, characterised by the CfE principles of curriculum design: Breadth, Depth, Progression, Challenge and Enjoyment, Relevance, Coherence, Personalisation and Choice.
- Pupils are able to participate in a wide range of inter-disciplinary learning experiences and achieve a broad range of learning outcomes.
- There is close partnership working with parents and LA’s to achieve the best outcomes for each individual pupil. These are planned collaboratively through regular Educational and Transition Review meetings.
- Partnerships with local mainstream schools enable the delivery of a range of academic subjects to meet individual needs.
- Academic work is complemented by independent living skills and VI specific skills.

5.2.7. The full CfE subject range is offered at school. The eight curriculum areas of CfE are:

- Expressive arts
- Health and wellbeing
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Religious and moral education
- Sciences
- Social studies
- Technologies
5.2.8. How traditional subjects fit into this framework:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CfE Curriculum Area</th>
<th>Examples of Subjects</th>
<th>Examples of VI specific skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Arts</td>
<td>Music, Drama, Art, CDT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellbeing</td>
<td>PE, PD, Home Economics</td>
<td>Independent Living Skills, Orientation and Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>English, Modern Foreign Languages</td>
<td>Literacy, Communication, Braille, Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Numeracy, ILS – Money, Time, measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RME</td>
<td>RME</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>Biology, Chemistry, Physics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Geography, History, Modern Studies, Politics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>ICT, CDT</td>
<td>Assistive Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3. Outreach Services

5.3.1. Although not explicitly stated as a condition of GASS funding, the school has always operated on the assumption that part of its national remit is to provide a range of outreach services to support learners with VI across Scotland. However, there is no explicit mechanism for funding these services. Outreach services include:

- Information and support to families about choices in educational provision
- Support and CPD training to staff working with pupils with VI across Scotland and further afield
- Sharing of educational resources
- Provision of ‘taster weeks’ for VI pupils attending other schools
- Hosting and delivering some modules in the postgraduate VI course at Edinburgh University
- Hosting and delivering some VI CPD modules offered by the SSC
- Hosting and delivering some modules of the Paediatric Habilitation course of the Institute of Education, London University
- Facilitating training of Care staff to attain the required Scottish Vocational Qualifications
- Hosting placements of university students studying, social work, teaching, nursing and therapy

5.3.2. Members of school staff represent the interests of young people with VI through active participation in organisations such as:

- MDVI Euronet
- Educating Through Care Scotland (ETCS)
- Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS)
- Scottish Government Cross Party Group on VI

5.3.3. Members of school staff have contributed and continue to contribute to the development of the CfE, the National Qualifications Framework and the Mobility and Independence Specialists in Education (MISE) professional standards.

5.3.4. Issues relating to VI, the school and its pupils are represented through staff participation in:

- Braille teachers’ Group
- Edinburgh Heads Association
• Mobility and Independence Specialists in Education (MISE)
• Scottish Association of Visual Impairment Educators (SAVIE)
• Scottish Council on Visual Impairment (SCOVI)
• United Kingdom Authority on Alternative Formats (UKAAF)
• National VI Technology Group

Photo: A pupil singing at a public event
6. Alternative Future Service Delivery Strategies

6.1. The Future Role of the Royal Blind School

6.1.1. The analysis of the legislation, literature, survey responses, interviews, enrolment trends and influences provides compelling evidence to support the recommendation that the Royal Blind School has a long-term future role as both a national provider of education and care for those young people with VI whose needs cannot be met by their LA without assistance, and as a National VI Educational Resource Centre providing services to support the education of young people with VI throughout Scotland.

6.1.2. To enable the School to fulfil this long-term vision, it is necessary to review the way in which these services are provided in order to ensure effective future service development and delivery that is responsive to changing needs and efficient in its utilisation of resources.

6.1.3. In the medium term, it is important to achieve efficiencies in order to create a balanced budget as a basis for sustainable future service development.

6.1.4. To achieve such efficiencies without compromising service quality, we need to consider a range of possible service delivery strategies. This chapter describes and evaluates the alternative service strategy models, considering the School’s location, staffing and future service development and makes recommendations for the long-term future of the School.

6.2. Location

In the long-term, the School needs to efficiently accommodate a pupil roll of 25. As the current school buildings are able to accommodate in excess of 174 pupils across its two campuses, it is necessary to consider the implications of the options for accommodating the School in the long-term. The options to be examined and the subsections in which their implications are listed are:

- Maintain the status quo by continuing to operate the School as at present on both of the two existing campuses (at Canaan Lane and Craigmillar Park), section 6.2.1
- Develop the School on a new site to cater for all pupils, section 6.2.2
- Consolidate the School onto one campus at Craigmillar Park, section 6.2.3
- Consolidate the School onto one campus at Canaan Lane, section 6.2.4

The evaluation of these options is at section 6.3
6.2.1. Two Campuses – the Status Quo

Continuing to operate the school on two campuses as at present, with a small number of pupils who have MDVI attending the Canaan Lane campus and those with VI only or VI and ASN attending the Craigmillar Park campus would have the following implications:

**Functional Implications**

- Continued duplication of overhead costs, job roles and services, resulting in continued high operational costs
- The Care Commission’s recommendation to move residential accommodation out of the school building at Craigmillar Park would need to be acted upon.
- The additional building requirements on the Craigmillar Park campus, as identified in the proposed redevelopment plans that are currently on hold would need to be acted upon. These include:
  - Replacing the single, small lift
  - Improving evacuation safety for non-ambulant pupils,
  - Improving the heating system
  - Replacing the swimming pool
  - Relocating the kitchen to improve accessibility to the dining room
  - Re-configuring the internal layout of rooms to accommodate the removal of residential accommodation and the relocation of the kitchen
- Operating substantially under capacity on each campus
- Time lost for pupils and staff travelling between campuses
- Transport costs for travel between campuses
- Whether either or both campus are used, there is a desire to create training/conference facilities to develop the school’s CPD activities and Outreach function

On the positive side there would be:

- No disruption to existing services
- No disruption to the services that share the campuses: Forward Vision, Kidscene and Scottish Braille Press
- No need for capital works (and the associated expenditure) to make one campus or the other fit for purpose for all pupils (but capital works would still be needed to address the issues listed above at Craigmillar Park, and to provide alternative residential accommodation)
One option is to continue as at present, but with reducing income as a result of lower pupil numbers. In order to move the residential facilities out of the main school building at Craigmillar Park, we could:

- Proceed with the planned redevelopment at a cost of approximately £12M
- Build a combined residential / pool building on the site of the Caretaker’s Bungalow at a cost of approximately £5m
- Move all residential accommodation to Canaan Lane. This would necessitate daily travel from residence to school, possibly requiring additional vehicles and drivers. In this scenario, Forward Vision would have to relocate from the Canaan Lane campus as the houses they occupy would be required for school boarding.

6.2.2. New Site

Neither of the existing campuses is completely suited to purpose as the sole campus to accommodate the future pupil population of the Royal Blind School. One alternative would be to sell both existing campuses and develop a school designed for the long-term anticipated pupil population on a new site.

Functional Implications

- Operational cost savings from being located on a single campus
- Increase in reserves from the proceeds of the sale of existing properties
- Long time frame (approximately 5 years) required to secure a property, planning permission and construction
- Potential high cost of acquiring land and building
- Difficulty in finding a suitable site
- Interruption to pupils’ known mobility routes
- Difficulty of establishing a partnership arrangement with a Local Authority school. The option of developing a new school on a new site was explored in the Blue Sky Report. This option would provide excellent opportunities to create a new school in partnership with a LA, thus creating opportunities for inclusion of the pupils of the Royal Blind School in a mainstream setting, while maintaining good access to specialist teaching and care expertise on site. It would also enable some operational efficiency from shared resources and staffing. However, at the time of the Blue Sky Report, although there was some initial interest from Edinburgh City Council, the difficulties of deciding on an appropriate site and funding construction and operation of a new school could not be resolved in a timely fashion. Partnering with other LA’s may still be a possibility but the advantages of the school’s location within the Edinburgh City area would be lost.
6.2.3. Consolidating the School onto one Campus at Craigmillar Park

Significant efficiencies could be achieved by consolidating the School onto one campus, thus reducing the duplication of services and staffing, and the cost of transport between campuses. The following two points address the implications of delivering school services from either the Canaan Lane or the Craigmillar Park campuses.

Functional Implications

- Acceptance of a permanent reduction in pupil roll
- Reduced operational costs of the total school
- Increase in reserves from the proceeds of the sale of The Canaan Lane campus and possibly some of the houses adjacent to the Craigmillar Park campus (Until a new, accessible residential building is constructed the adjoining houses would still be needed to provide accommodation. However, they are not accessible for pupils with mobility impairments so these pupils would have to either live in the main school building or continue to reside in the Canaan Lane residences until such time as the new residential building is constructed.) 16 West Savile Road might be retained as both the coffee shop and parent accommodation are housed in this building.)
- Slightly closer to shops and bus routes for mobility training
- A substantial and expensive residential building would still have to be constructed to meet the Care Commission’s recommendation to move residential accommodation out of the school building and to accommodate non-ambulant pupils
- No hydrotherapy pool
- Swimming pool needing replaced as it is at the end of its operational life
- Concerns regarding safe evacuation of non-ambulant pupils; an additional lift (or two) would be needed
- Extensive outdoor play spaces but no courtyards and no sensory garden
- Less onsite parking but more parking in surrounding streets
- Sale of Canaan Lane would be partial, or Forward Vision would need to be relocated
• Kidscene would need to be relocated if the Canaan Lane campus was sold
• Parent accommodation could continue to be provided in 16 West Savile Road if this building was retained or it could be provided in the Gate Lodge which is currently tenanted.
• Training/conference facilities could be incorporated into a new residential building.
• Need to create sensory room
• Need to create an assessment suite
• No fixed manual handling equipment (eg: tracking hoists)
• All present residential accommodation at Craigmillar Park is unsuitable for non-ambulant pupils
• Capital works required to modify rooms for use as accessible toilets and bathrooms, sensory rooms, therapy treatment areas and storage spaces for mobility and positioning equipment.

Additional Facilities Required
• Alternative location for Scottish Braille Press (desirable but not essential)
• Alternative location for Forward Vision (if Canaan Lane site sold)
• Alternative location for Kidscene (if Canaan Lane site is sold)
• Additional accessible bathroom/toilet facilities
• Accessible accommodation building out with the school building to accommodate residential pupils
• Second, larger lift and replacement of existing lift with a new, larger one
• Stair lifts to aid in evacuation
• Storage areas in school for mobility and positioning equipment
• Tracking hoists
• Hydrotherapy pool
• Sensory Garden
• Enclosed, sheltered outdoor play areas
• Sensory Rooms
• New swimming pool or arrangements to use another pool in the community
• Capital works required to relocate kitchen to basement and convert existing residential areas in the school building to classroom space
• Improved temperature control on heating
• Visual Assessment suite
• More accessible classrooms and library
• More accessible independence flat (possibly in the Bungalow or the new residential building)
• Training/Conference facilities

6.2.4. Consolidating the School onto one Campus at Canaan Lane

Significant efficiencies could be achieved by consolidating the School onto one campus, thus reducing the duplication of services and staffing, and the cost of transport between campuses. The following two points address the implications of delivering school services from either the Canaan Lane or the Craigmillar Park campuses.

Functional Implications
• Acceptance of a permanent reduction in pupil roll
• Reduced operational costs of the total School
• Increase in reserves from the proceeds of the sale of the Craigmillar Park campus. However, the adjoining houses would be kept to provide additional residential accommodation as required.
• Optimising the use of the purpose-built facilities
• Taking advantage of Canaan Lane’s established excellent reputation
• Hydrotherapy pool but no regular swimming pool
• Less area for outdoor play but beautiful established sensory garden
• More onsite parking but lack of parking in surrounding streets
• Forward Vision would need to be relocated off-campus if the numbers of boarding pupils exceeds the capacity of the 4 bungalows at Canaan Lane plus the houses adjacent to the Craigmillar Park campus. (However, pupil projections suggest that this would be unlikely.)
• Kidscene may need to be relocated as the whole school building would be required for school use.
• Whether either or both campuses are used, there is a desire to create training / conference facilities. These could be built in the attic space above the front building and could be utilised by all departments of Royal Blind.
• Parent accommodation could be provided in existing accommodation upstairs above one of the residential houses. This facility could be shared by Forward Vision and the School.
• The multi-purpose room could be modified for use as an Enterprise Activity such as a Coffee Shop and could be shared by both Forward Vision and the School.

• There is a perception that Canaan Lane is only for children and young people with very complex medical and disability issues. This may result in either the young people themselves, or their parents, feeling that they are inappropriately placed at the Canaan Lane campus. In the short term, the programmes for pupils with MDVI and those with VI and ASN could be run in separate areas of the one building if the reaction from referring agencies and parents was such that it becomes necessary.

• It is slightly further to shops and bus routes for mobility training.

• Capital works would be required to modify rooms for use as subject specialist rooms and to create an assembly hall/performance space and outdoor play facilities.

• There might be a need for additional on-site parking. (There are 2 bus bays, 50 permanent parking bays, space for 15 cars in drop-off bays out with pupil arrival and departure times and the potential to add 5 more bays on the eastern side of the school.)

Additional Facilities Required

• Sale of Craigmillar Park would be partial, or Scottish Braille Press would have to relocate off site

• Review facilities available for Kidscene

• Existing rooms to be modified to provide:
  o Science Laboratory and greenhouse
  o CDT (Craft, Design and Technology Room)
  o Art Room
  o Home Economics/Independent Living Skills Room
  o Coffee Shop
  o Larger library
  o Assembly Hall/Performance space
  o Parent accommodation

• An accessible independent living skills area incorporating the Independence flat could be developed.

• Outdoor play equipment to be purchased and installed in quadrangles

• A separate, secure entry could be constructed to provide entry to the Parent Accommodation above one of the residential houses.

• The attic area above the front building could be developed for use as training/conference facilities.

• Community facilities would need to be accessed for swimming, other than in the hydrotherapy pool.
6.3. Evaluation of Options for Service Delivery Strategies

6.3.1. In this section, the various options for future service delivery strategies are analysed and recommendations made.

6.3.2. Status Quo - This option would require the continued use of reserves to meet the operating deficit in addition to meeting the capital cost of constructing a new residential building and reconfiguring the main school building at Craigmillar Park. However, such an approach must be time limited as the reserves are finite and unless expenditure is reduced, the reserves would ultimately be whittled away.

Owing to the substantial ongoing expenditure arising from duplication of services, maintaining the status quo on two campuses is **NOT** recommended.

6.3.3. New Site - Owing to the difficulties of securing a suitable and affordable site and partner school/s, the high cost of building and the uncertainty of future needs, the option of developing a new school site is **NOT** recommended.

6.3.4. One Campus at Craigmillar Park - If we were to consolidate the functions of the School onto one campus, we could continue to offer the current level and range of high quality educational, residential, therapeutic and nursing services to our pupils at significantly reduced cost.

Using the Craigmillar Park campus for a one-campus delivery model would require considerable capital expenditure to address the functional limitations of the site. There is a lack of accessible facilities and safe egress routes from many areas of the building for pupils whose mobility is restricted. A new building needs to be constructed to provide accessible residential accommodation out with the school building. Considerable reconfiguration of the interior of the school building would also be required. The planned new building may no longer meet current Care Inspectorate requirements for new-build facilities. Specifically, it has not been designed with individual en-suite bathrooms.

There may be some merit in considering a one-campus model located on the Craigmillar Park campus, if an alternative design for the residential building was feasible, enabling the construction of a building that is:

- Lower-cost than the current proposed new development
- Fully accessible
• Fully compliant with current Care Inspectorate requirement
• Approved by Council for planning permission

Ideally, such a building would also house a new swimming pool/gymnasium and meeting rooms_CONFIDENTIAL_ conference facilities. It would be preferably located on the site of the current bungalow, swimming pool or Scottish Braille Press building to enable the whole of the existing school building to be utilised for the combined pupil population.

Owing to the high cost of these capital improvements, the option of adopting a one-campus model located at Craigmillar Park is **NOT** recommended.

6.3.5. One Campus at Canaan Lane - Consolidating school provision onto one campus at the Canaan Lane campus, remains the most viable option for reducing costs without decreasing the quality of services the School is able to offer.

Analysis of the Canaan Lane campus indicates that there is considerable spare capacity. Therefore, catering for the addition of current and projected Craigmillar Park pupil numbers and their requirements would be entirely feasible, unlike the opposite alternative of accommodating Canaan Lane pupils on the Craigmillar Park campus.

Refurbishment work would be required to make the campus fit for purpose as a one-campus school. This would be a one-off capital cost.

Selling part or all of the Craigmillar Park campus and ultimately the adjacent houses would realise a considerable capital injection for Royal Blind and could also offer substantial on-going capital savings. Similarly, on-going operational expenses would be considerably reduced by operating solely from the Canaan Lane campus. **A one-campus model located on the Canaan Lane campus is the preferred and recommended option.**

6.3.6. There are five basic questions to consider in order to test the merit of this recommendation:

- **Is continuing the school into the long-term future a valid way forward, consistent with the mission of Royal Blind?** The stated mission of Royal Blind is to provide education to children with VI. The continuation of the school into the long-term future is consistent with this mission but is not the only way to achieve the mission. Operating solely a National VI Educational Resource Centre to support the education of young people with VI wherever they are being educated in Scotland would also achieve this mission. However, maintaining the necessary
expertise for this role would be made more difficult in the absence of the constant experience of teaching VI children in school.

b. Is continuing the school into the long-term future a valid way forward, consistent with the needs of Scotland's children and young people with VI? To judge whether continuing the school into the long-term future is a valid way of meeting the needs of Scotland’s VI children and young people, one might ask whether the educational needs of VI children in Scotland could be adequately catered for if the Royal Blind School ceased to exist. We know that:

- There is a legislated presumption to mainstream.
- The Concordat between the Scottish Government and local government has enhanced the role that local government plays. While the Scottish Government sets the direction of policy and overarching outcomes, LA’s and their partners are responsible for meeting the varying local needs and circumstances across Scotland. (Allan, 2012, 10)
- Survey feedback from LA’s indicates that there is a strong commitment to mainstreaming and an even stronger commitment to local education. However, LA’s acknowledge that there will continue to be a small number of children with VI whose complex needs cannot be met by the LA. Therefore, there continues to be a special role that can legitimately be filled by the Royal Blind School into the future, providing education and care for children with complex support needs arising from VI and additional difficulties. In addition to the direct education of enrolled pupils, the School could gainfully fulfil a role as a National VI Educational Resource Centre aimed at supporting pupils with VI being educated by LA’s throughout Scotland.

c. Can the Royal Blind School deliver the recommended model of service delivery? The Royal Blind school has a long history of delivering high quality education and care to young people with VI. Its staff is well qualified and experienced for this task. The organisation already owns the required infrastructure resources required to deliver this service strategy.

d. Is there a risk that our assumptions and interpretations are incorrect resulting in wastage of the capital investment in the one-campus service delivery strategy at Canaan Lane? The assumptions and interpretations underpinning the recommendations of this report are based in the fact of current experience and informed by the legislation, literature and feedback from key stakeholders. All of this evidence supports the interpretations drawn: that the long-term school will provide an important national resource and safety net for those VI pupils who cannot be educated in their local area without assistance and support.
e. **Is the recommended model viable in terms of its call on resources?**

While the recommended model will require an initial investment to carry out the capital works needed, the ongoing operational and overhead costs will be significantly reduced from the current two-campus model. This cost reduction, in combination with a review of fees, should ensure future financial viability in terms of the call on Royal Blind’s resources.

Photo: A pupil proudly displays medals from his sporting achievements

Royal Blind School – Strategic Review May 2012
Julie Fardell - Principal
6.4. Staffing

In this section, the staffing needs for the long-term school projected after the year 2020 are detailed.

6.4.1. Corresponding to a long-term pupil population of 25, the total number of staff will clearly be significantly lower than current levels. Options to address this include decreasing the number of subject specialist teachers by decreasing the range of subjects taught or decreasing the staff:pupil ratio. To provide a viable service in the future, the Royal Blind School must provide a value-added service, over and above what is already available in the LA’s.

6.4.2. As the majority of pupils in the future are expected to have VI & ASN, they will be unlikely to undertake studies above Intermediate 2 (the new National 5) level. However, to deliver the Curriculum for Excellence with its emphasis on a broad, general education up to S3 it will be important to retain a range of specialist subject teachers to enable personalisation and choice within the curriculum. Another future role for the school could be to provide VI –specific tutoring to VI pupils enrolled in higher level courses at other schools. This too would require the retention of a range of subject specialist teachers and subject-specific classrooms and equipment to facilitate the delivery of VI-specific education, independent living skills, mobility and the use of assistive technology. Depending on pupils’ individual subject choices, partnerships with mainstream schools will be continued and further developed to enable a full range of curricular choice. Similarly, links with Colleges will be further developed to enable a broad range of service provision to individual vocational goals and transition requirements.

6.4.3. Again, given the anticipate future pupil population, school staff will need to develop specific expertise in working with children with VI and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). As we anticipate that pupils with VI and SEBD/ASD will make up a large proportion of the future pupil roll, this will become an area of specialist expertise within the school and will also form the basis of CPD training and support to other providers and families.

6.4.4. Given the CfE emphasis on a senior phase for pupils in S4-S6, there will also be a need to develop and retain both education and care staff who have expertise, experience and qualifications in educating young people with VI. Specifically, school staff will develop and share their expertise in delivering individually tailored transition programmes that combine academic, vocational and independent living skills education. Initially, developing skills in these areas and in SEBD and ASD will require focused programmes of CPD for the staff. However, these will ultimately become
areas in which the staff of the School has significant expertise that can be shared through its Outreach programme.

6.4.5. The School prides itself on its collaborative inter-disciplinary working and the integration of care and education. However, this is an area that can be further developed in the future, to meet the care and educational needs of learners with VI and ASN, as they learn and apply a range of functional, academic and vocational skills. To accommodate this, there will be a higher level of integration between education and care with members of care staff being allocated to education teams and pupils having the opportunity to attend for an extended day and/or during some holiday periods to develop the range of independence skills required to transition successfully to post-school life. Both day and residential pupils will be able to attend for an extended day (and possibly during holiday periods) to engage in enrichment activities, especially focusing on Habilitation and the development of Communication, Functional Literacy and Numeracy, Social Skills, Independent Living Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Braille / Moon and Assistive Technology.

6.5. Future Service Development - School as a National VI Educational Resource Centre

6.5.1. Consultation with key stakeholders indicated support for diversifying Royal Blind School services in order to provide outreach and support services to learners with VI throughout Scotland, their families and the staff who support them. The Royal Blind School is well placed to achieve this, given the experience and specialised expertise of its staff. It is therefore recommended that the Royal Blind School diversify its services to become a National VI Educational Resource Centre. This is consistent with both the Education Act and the requirements placed by the Scottish Government upon the schools in the grant-aided sector to provide services that remove barriers to education for pupils with ASN.

6.5.2. However, significant work would need to be undertaken to determine the range of services required, how they would be funded and where they would be located. Depending upon need, the Resource Centre could be centrally based in Edinburgh or could include regional hubs.

6.5.3. Diversified services might be developed as part of the School or as additional services of Royal Blind. The CPD and Kidscene services should be continued and further developed.

6.5.4. The trend for mainstreaming and local area provision indicates that there will be a future need to provide VI support services at a national level to support pupils with VI wherever they are in Scotland, in addition to those who are enrolled at the School.
6.5.5. Provided the need for a National VI Educational Resource Centre can be established and funding mechanisms identified, it is recommended that establishing a National VI Educational Resource Centre be investigated.

6.5.6. The School will develop its role as a National VI Educational Resource Centre, providing a range of services to remove the barriers to education experienced by VI pupils from across Scotland. The workforce of qualified teachers in VI is ageing, so there is likely to be a greater need for support to LA’s as these people retire, reducing expertise in VI education in some local areas.

6.5.7. The well-trained and experienced Care staff of the Royal Blind School would provide valuable guidance, support and training to staff in care establishments across Scotland that care for children and young people with VI and MDVI.

6.5.8. Staff engaged in the National VI Educational Resource Centre role would develop collaborative partnership working arrangements with organisations such as Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and local Societies for the Blind, the Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC), the CALL Centre and SENSE Scotland as well as a network of mainstream and special schools and colleges.

6.5.9. The National VI Educational Resource Centre could provide services such as:

- Functional VI assessment
- Flexible pupil-support packages
- Tutoring
- VI Resources
- Educational assessment and programming services
- Policy advice
- VI Awareness Training
- CPD
- Bespoke training
- Intensive education in Braille, orientation and mobility, independent living skills and the use of assistive technology
- Assistance to LA’s in setting up, operating and evaluating local VI services
- Information and support to parents and families
- Regional Hubs to support local LA provision of VI services
• A range of activity weeks to promote the development of independent living skills
• Strengthened links with colleges, mainstream and other special schools
• Senior Phase / Transition Programmes
• Specialised expertise in working with children with VI and SEBD and/or ASD.

The range of services would depend on consultation regarding needs and funding mechanisms.

6.6. Financial Viability of the Recommended Long-term School

6.6.1. Staffing

The major component of the School’s operational expenses is related to staff salaries and associated staff costs. Accordingly, an analysis of staff requirements has been performed to gauge the operational and financial ramifications of consolidating the School programme onto one campus at Canaan Lane. This is presented below.

Table: Services in one campus, based on an assumed long-term pupil roll of 25 pupils with VI & ASN, half of whom are boarders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Staff</th>
<th>Current FTE</th>
<th>Required FTE 25 pupil school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depute Headteacher (DHT)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers / Principal Teachers (PTs)</td>
<td>30 / 6.2</td>
<td>10.2 / 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery Nurses (NNs)</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Assistants (CAs)</td>
<td>34.76</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Care (HoC)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Head of Care (DHoC)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Nurse</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Residential Care Workers (SRCWs)</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Care Workers (RCWs)</td>
<td>42.48</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Attendants</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapists</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2 (to inc. manual handling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Handling</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribers</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habilitation</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Staff</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Staff</td>
<td>16.37</td>
<td>6.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>183.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>60.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- These staffing figures have been used to calculate the cost per pupil for the long-term model.
- Teachers would include full-time class teachers and a range of part-time subject teachers to facilitate delivery of the full curriculum.
- Class teams would comprise teachers, nursery nurses and RCWs.
- We would recruit our own therapists rather than having a service level agreement with NHS. The Physiotherapist would assume responsibility for manual handling.

6.6.2. Overhead Savings

The saving in overhead costs from relocation to a single site at Canaan Lane is £443k per annum.

6.6.3. Projected Long-Term Cost per Pupil

Based on 25 pupils, 13 of whom are residential, attending a one-campus school at Canaan Lane, costs per pupil are £95,829.

6.6.4. Discounting any GASS grant the pupil fees would thus be £95,829 per pupil on average per annum in order to meet operating costs. The day fee would be less and the residential fee would be more.

This compares with a cost per pupil of £76,714 in 2007-8 when we had 121 pupils and £106,018 budgeted for 2012-13. At present our non-subsidised residential fee with enhanced support to pupils outwith Scotland is £86,822.

6.6.5. By way of external comparison, New Struan School which is an independent non-GAS school, charges £53,844 per annum for day pupil and £92,040 for boarding pupils. Daldorch School charges in the vicinity of £250,000 per annum per pupil for 52-week a year boarding provision. Therefore, while LA’s are unlikely to welcome higher fees, there is already a precedent of higher fees being paid elsewhere.
6.6.6. Cost of Capital Works

The capital cost of refurbishing the Canaan lane campus to accommodate the long-term school is estimated to be £4.4 million. This is lower than those for Phase One of the Craigmillar Park project and within the present designated fund balance which can be met if necessary from invested reserves. An appropriate fundraising campaign could be conducted to subsidise the amount of funds needed from these reserves.

The plan would result in a significant amount of surplus property. For interest, the estimated current valuation on some of those properties follows in the next section.

These refurbishments would be sufficient to accommodate the school in its transition to the long-term stable pupil roll. Thus it could accommodate 48 pupils (the anticipated pupil roll in August 2014), and allow for growth from the anticipated pupil roll of 25 if there are any unforeseen changes to enrolment patterns in the future. This would enable us to be responsive to any increase in enrolment requests.

Work required in summary

- Create sufficient classrooms to have a classroom for each form class as well as dedicated classrooms for each subject area, including specialist facilities for Science, Art, Craft and Design, Computing and a larger library.
- Create an assembly hall / performance space
- Create sufficient storage and preparation space.
- Create an independent skills training flat
- Create Parent accommodation
- Create training / CPD facilities
- Create a greenhouse and allotment areas (for Enterprise and vocational training)
- Create an area for use as a Coffee Shop (for Enterprise and vocational training)
- Fence play areas
- Provide additional parking

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23 A full list of the required works appears in Appendix 7.
The cost for these works is estimated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main School Building changes</td>
<td>£2,054,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Accommodation Main School Building (to create a hall/performance space)</td>
<td>£703,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Accommodation</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an independence flat</td>
<td>£250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra parking</td>
<td>£90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Building – to provide a CPD/Training/Conference facility</td>
<td>£1,124,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The old hydro pool area could be converted to a common room</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alter multi-purpose room to form coffee shop</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works to external area as noted plus allowance for signage, lighting, road markings etc.</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>£4,372,322</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.6.7. Potential Capital Income from the Sale of Assets at Craigmillar Park

In the short to medium-term the adjacent houses could be kept to provide additional pupil accommodation until a pupil roll is reached that can be accommodated at Canaan Lane (presently estimated 2016).

Table: Capital gain from selling the Craigmillar Park campus and adjacent houses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Valuation as at 2009</th>
<th>Current valuation estimate (-20%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craigmillar Park including Braille Press</td>
<td>£12,000,000.00</td>
<td>£9,600,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 West Savile Road</td>
<td>£725,000.00</td>
<td>£580,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 West Savile Road (Drever)</td>
<td>£850,000.00</td>
<td>£680,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savile Terrace (The Hostel)</td>
<td>£650,000.00</td>
<td>£520,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>£14,425,000.00</td>
<td>£11,540,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo: pupils participate in multi-sensory learning in a parachute game
7. Transition to the Long-term Model

7.1. Medium Term Pupil Numbers Projection

Our present pupil roll is the result of old referral patterns that are no longer relevant, given the legislation of the past decade and the resulting increase in local provision. If we plan, as is the norm, to provide for our current pupils until they reach 6th form, the decrease in pupil numbers will be gradual. We can discern this pattern by carrying out a further projection. The following provides an break-down of projected pupil numbers on an annual basis until pupil numbers stabilise. It is based on current enrolments and assumed future intake. Figures are broken down by campus. Residential pupils are shown as a separate subset of the whole school pupil roll.

All Pupils:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>11/12</th>
<th>12/13</th>
<th>13/14</th>
<th>14/15</th>
<th>15/16</th>
<th>16/17</th>
<th>17/18</th>
<th>18/19</th>
<th>19/20</th>
<th>20/21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craigmillar &amp; future starts</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>36</td>
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Residential Pupils Only:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>12/13</th>
<th>13/14</th>
<th>14/15</th>
<th>15/16</th>
<th>16/17</th>
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<td>14.5</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canaan Lane Population</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole School</td>
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<td>31.5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2. Planning for the Period of Transition

7.2.1. Each year, projected pupil numbers appear to be reasonably sustainable. The deficit may rise and fall at different times throughout the transition process, but with the decrease in the absolute size of the pupil population, the overall financial burden on Royal Blind should fall.

The changes recommended as a result of this Strategic Review will require careful planning to be successfully implemented. A well-planned process will be required to achieve a smooth transition from the current service delivery strategy to the recommended one-campus model based at Canaan Lane. This section outlines the necessary steps to achieve an effective transition with minimal disruption to pupils, their families and staff of the School.
7.2.2. Transitional arrangements will involve those steps required to relocate onto one campus, reduce staff numbers and develop interdisciplinary staff teams that can deliver high quality education and care to the projected long-term pupil population without detriment and with minimal disruption to the existing pupils. To reduce costs quickly, it may be possible to achieve the move to one campus in August 2013. However, the process of drawing up detailed plans, obtaining quotes and planning permission and carrying out the required works is likely to take more than one year, meaning that August 2014 would be a more realistic timeframe.

7.2.3. Managing and implementing the transition phase will involve further consultation with key stakeholders as the plans are finalised in more detail, including:

- Pupils and their families
- Staff
- Local Authorities
- The Care Inspectorate
- The Scottish Government Support for Learning Directorate
- Education Scotland. There will also be considerable consultation with potential education partners in the school and college sectors.

7.2.4. It is expected that the pupil roll will stabilise in about 2020-2021. As pupil numbers decrease year by year over the intervening 8 years, it will be important to achieve corresponding reductions in staff numbers. The overall deficit each year will decline from its present level.

7.2.5. Over the past few years, the full range of staffing has been maintained in the hope of returning to a full pupil roll. However, as staff members have left, they have not been replaced unless essential. Programmes of voluntary redundancy were implemented to reduce the numbers of Senior Residential Care Workers (SRCWs) and Nurses in line with declining pupil numbers. However, we still have more staff than can be sustained given the projection of future pupil numbers. Consolidating the School onto one campus will allow for the removal of some duplication of staff roles and further reductions in staff numbers will be required until the pupil roll stabilises at about 25 pupils. The main challenge is to maintain the diversity of staff needed to deliver personalisation and choice through the Curriculum for Excellence and to continue to maintain the VI expertise and qualifications that have been built up over a long period, to enable the delivery of high quality, specialised VI support in both education and care.
7.2.6. When the outcome of the Doran Review is known and any resulting impact upon the Government Grant is analysed as well as year by year as the adjustment progresses, pupil fees will need to be reviewed so that they more accurately reflect the actual cost of service provision.

7.3. 2012-13

The following transitional arrangements should be implemented during the school session 2012-13.

7.3.1. In 2012-13 the school should continue to operate on two campuses as at present.

7.3.2. The School Business Plan and the School Improvement Plan will be written to reflect the planned changes.

7.3.3. A schedule of meetings will be planned to inform all key stakeholders of the planned changes and the timetable for implementation.

7.3.4. As staff members leave, each post will be reviewed and if replacement is deemed necessary, temporary contracts will be offered. This will reduce the need for later redundancies.

7.3.5. Staff numbers that will be required through the next eight years and in the long term will be planned, and plans will be made for reducing staff numbers with an emphasis on natural wastage and avoiding redundancy. Annual budgets based on a long term staffing plan.

7.3.6. Architects and builders will be engaged to draw up detailed plans, provide quotations and seek planning permission for the renovations that are required at Canaan Lane and these will be brought to the Board for approval.

7.3.7. A public awareness and fundraising campaign will be launched to engender support and raise funds for the capital costs of refurbishment.

7.3.8. Fee levels will be reviewed in light of the outcomes of the Doran Review and any change in the GASS grant and set with the long term vision in mind to ensure strategic progression.

7.3.9. Staff training will focus on developing staff skills in the areas of ASD and SEBD. The emphasis on ensuring teachers have postgraduate VI qualifications will continue.

7.3.10. The School Improvement Plan will include the development of a whole school approach to the senior phase of schooling
7.3.11. Opportunities for further developing and delivering user-pays CPD training will be investigated.

7.3.12. Any excess staff time will be deployed to projects aimed at diversifying school services consistent with development as a National VI Educational Resource Centre.

7.3.13. Any required new job roles will be developed and Job Descriptions and Person Specifications written.

7.3.14. Partnership arrangements will be established with Donaldson’s and Harmeny for joint CPD, Outdoor Education and Senior Phase programmes and with other Schools and Colleges for cooperative partnerships in delivery of the curriculum and provision of social inclusive activities.

7.3.15. Application will be made to seek planning permission for the development of the Craigmillar Park campus prior to sale.

7.3.16. Alternative locations will be sought to accommodate the Scottish Braille Press and possibly the Royal Blind Head Office. In this regard, it is recommended that a Business Park location with sound public transport links be considered. If a decision is made to co-locate the Royal Blind Head Office on a new site with the Scottish Braille Press, Royal Blind’s reserves could be increased through the sale of the Gillespie Crescent property.

7.4. 2013-14

7.4.1. In 2013-14, classes at the Canaan Lane campus will be located in two wings of the school building so that refurbishment works can be carried out in readiness for the start of the new school year in August 2014.

7.4.2. Partnership arrangements will be established with other Schools and Colleges for cooperative partnerships in the delivery of the curriculum and provision of inclusive activities.

7.4.3. The required building works will be carried out.

7.4.4. More intensive work will be undertaken to prepare the pupils for transition to the refurbished Canaan Lane campus, familiarising them with the new campus and travel routes.

7.4.5. There will be a series of consultations with LA’s, pupils’ families, staff and local residents about the upcoming changes.
7.4.6. A program of re-negotiating employment contracts and/or planned redundancies will be put in place as necessary.

7.4.7. Continue staff training in niche areas of VI & ASN.

7.4.8. A marketing campaign will be put in place to promote the new school facility, the range of flexible services available and the niche expertise of the school staff.

7.4.9. NHS will be notified that the Therapy Service Level Agreement will cease in July 2014. Recruit therapists to start in August 2014.

7.4.10. Negotiate the use of a local Leisure Centre for swimming as the new school campus will not have its own swimming pool.

7.4.11. Liaise with Forward Vision regarding opportunities for shared facilities such as the Independence Flat, the Coffee Shop and the Allotment for vocational training and enterprise activity.

7.4.12. Identify and train staff to build skills in delivering education to pupils in the Senior Phase including transition planning, the use of Assistive Technology and the development of independent living skills.

7.4.13. Prepare to relocate all pupils, staff and resources to the Canaan Lane campus.

7.5. 2014-15

7.5.1. All pupils commence attending full-time at Canaan Lane at the beginning of the new school session: August 2014. At this time, the projected pupil roll is 49, comprising 18 pupils with MDVI and 31 with VI and ASN. Approximately 24 of these would be residential to some extent. All classes and subject offerings could be accommodated in the school building. However, pupils resident in Drever and the Hostel (houses adjacent to the Craigmillar Park campus) would continue to be accommodated there and travel to school each day. This situation can remain until the number of boarders can be accommodated in the three bungalows at Canaan Lane, probably in August 2016. This alleviates the need for Forward Vision to be accommodated elsewhere.) Once the pupils have all moved to Canaan Lane, the three houses adjacent to the Craigmillar Park campus can be sold or used for other purposes.
8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1. The Strategic Review establishes the business case for Royal Blind to continue operating the school in the long term, with the expectation that the pupil roll will stabilise at 25 pupils, approximately half of whom will be residential. It is expected that these pupils will predominantly have visual impairment (VI) together with other additional support needs (ASN). The pupil age range will be concentrated in the secondary department with a small number of pupils in upper primary.

8.2. To provide the best facilities and achieve substantial efficiencies, it is recommended that the school be consolidated onto a single campus at Canaan Lane. Staffing numbers will need to be reduced in line with declining pupil numbers. These strategies will result in a reduction of the cost per pupil due to reduced overheads and staffing costs.

8.3. An initial application of funds will be required to carry out capital works to refurbish the Canaan Lane campus to accommodate all pupils. The estimated cost is less than that for Phase 1 of the Craigmillar Park Project and is less than the designated funds held in invested reserves.

8.4. During the transition from the current situation to the long-term school, the deficit will rise and fall, but overall, the reduced pupil numbers and efficiency savings will result in a smaller operating deficit.

8.5. Although the pupil population at the School will be small, the School will continue to play an important role in the continuum of educational services available to children with VI across Scotland. This is consistent with both the mission of Royal Blind and the needs of children and young people with VI throughout Scotland.

8.6. It is also recommended that the school diversify its services to become the National VI Educational Resource Centre for Scotland, the purpose of which is to support children and young people with additional support needs overcome their barriers to learning and realise their potential. Both roles are consistent with the stated purpose of the GASS grant and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended 2009).

8.7. Consistent with the Scottish Government-led Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), pupils will study a broad, general curriculum until the end of S3 and greater depth of study in S4 to S6, the senior phase. This will necessitate maintaining a team of specialist subject teachers in addition to class teachers.

8.8. In response to the anticipated age profile of pupils, there will be a strong emphasis in the Senior Phase on vocational learning and the knowledge and skills required to aid transition to adult life.
8.9. Transition to the recommended strategy, if adopted, would commence in August 2012 with detailed building plans, quotations and planning permission. The time for pupils and staff to move to the one campus will be August 2014.

8.10. During the eight year transition phase, there will need to be significant and substantial sharing of information and consultation with key stakeholders including the pupils, their families, staff, the Local Authorities and the regulatory bodies: the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland.

8.11. This is a major change for the school and may cause significant anxiety for some stakeholders. Therefore, it is essential that the process of change management be sensitively handled.

8.12. It is recommended that a senior member of staff be given primary responsibility for project management throughout the transition phase from August 2012 until the long-term model has been achieved and is working smoothly.
9. References


Ware, J., Butler, C., Robertson, C., O'Donnell, M. & Gould, M. (2011) Access to the curriculum for pupils with a variety of special educational needs in mainstream classes: An exploration of the experiences of young pupils in primary school. NCSE. Ireland.


Appendices

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Strategic Review

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to set out the subject areas and remit for a major strategic review of the Royal Blind School.

2. Background

2.1 Since the last major strategic development just over a decade ago, in which the Canaan Lane campus was established to use the whole of the Canaan Lane site and the residential bungalows were upgraded, there has been one strategic review, the “Blue Sky” Report, which was produced in 2006 and considered by the Board in 2008. The Blue Sky report was driven by the need to consider the future of the Craigmillar Park site following a recommendation by the Care Commission that residential accommodation should not be within the school building and that the Scottish Braille Press was inappropriately placed within the campus.

2.2 The Blue Sky Report led to the conclusion that the school should not relocate activities from the Craigmillar Park campus and a three-phase plan to improve the site at Craigmillar Park was developed. The plan includes the following:

- Phase 1 Demolish the West wing, build new residential accommodation, rearrange facilities within the school improving access
- Phase 2 Construct a new swimming pool and demolish the old one (being at the end of its operating lifespan)
- Phase 3 Build a new Scottish Braille Press and corporate head office and demolish the existing Scottish Braille Press
- Phase 1 has since been fully designed and approved by the planning authorities but commencement of works is on hold until at the earliest July 2013.

2.3 The last four years have seen significant changes in the school roll. The numbers of pupils at both campuses have reduced.

2.4 At Canaan Lane, there have been low external referrals in the recent years, with none in 2010/11 and little interest in August 2012 starts. The provision of full boarding seven nights a week and 52 weeks a year ceased in the summer of 2011, and, as a result of this and of the generally
low uptake of respite services, we currently only offer residential care on one weekend in three in term-time.

2.5 At Craigmillar Park referrals are steady, but only at a level that would preserve our reduced number of around 33 pupils. The age at which pupils are referred has tended in recent times to be well into the secondary years, so that our primary provision is now 17% of the total roll (6 each campus). Pupils referred are now generally presenting with other needs for support than simply visual impairment, including autism, communication and motor issues and mild/moderate learning disabilities so that by comparison to a few years ago there are fewer pupils working towards SQA Standard Grade and Highers.

2.6 The reduction in numbers at the school has restricted opportunities for pupils to learn interactively with their peers, and impacts financially on Royal Blind, which is now subsidising this service from donated and investment income and reserves to the tune of £1.3 million a year.

2.7 The funding basis of Scotland’s grant aided special schools has been called into question a number of times in past decades, and this is now being addressed again by the Scottish Government through the Doran Review. The review is looking primarily at how needs should be met beyond local authority provision, the pathways to referral and how the resulting strategy should be reflected in any new financial model.

2.8 For the last three years, the Business Plans adopted by the Board have been on the basis that we retain the capacity to provide what we have previously provided, awaiting the outcome of the Doran Review to give pointers for later consideration of our future direction. This is achieved at significant financial cost, which the organisation is fortunate to be able to meet from its resources for a limited period.

2.9 During this period it has become evident that any changes from the Doran Review or other influences would need to change patterns of usage of the school fairly significantly for the school to return to the capacity and pupil mix it had five years ago. It is already clear that the Scottish Government is likely to be very reluctant to bring back to its own remit areas that it has very firmly devolved to local authorities.

2.10 As we have attempted to market the school over the last five years to address the shortfall in numbers, we have been aware of a number of challenges or obstacles to the referral of the pupils who by our own philosophy would benefit from a time at the Royal Blind School:

- The financial disincentive to authorities placing a child out with the authority’s own provision, which is compounded by the placement by the authorities of strict budgetary controls on out of authority placement
• Philosophical and legislative grounds for placing a child in mainstream and/or locally based services wherever possible

• Philosophical opposition to our approach, for example our view that for MDVI children the loss of sight is the paramount aspect to be addressed

• The inconsistency of the referral process with the appeal process that overrides it, and the difficulty of the appeal process

• Lack of appreciation within mainstream provision of the poor quality of access to education the pupil may be receiving or of the right in European legislation to equality of opportunity. The requirement in Scottish legislation is “adequate and efficient”.

2.11 There is appreciation of the school’s role as a centre of excellence; as a source of advice and training in best practice for VI education, habilitation and care. Our view has been that we can only sustain this by meaningful engagement in actual delivery of service to all relevant pupil groups.

2.12 Although the Board has settled for the time being on the path set out in 2.8, longer term concerns and priorities have been touched upon in discussion. The position of the Board at this time can be summed up as follows:

• We wish to honour our obligation to the Scottish Government and to Scotland as a whole to provide the best quality service to pupils we can reasonably provide, for as long as that obligation exists and can feasibly be met

• We are convinced of the high quality and value of the facilities and education we have provided and continue to provide and will strive to maintain it as long as there is a business case, informed by those who purchase our services, to do so

• We philosophically support the placement of children in mainstream settings or in local specialised units but are concerned that the quality of access to the curriculum or attention to visual impairment in those settings is not always of good quality and may be in danger of getting worse in the current financial environment

• We are keen to explore new ways in which we can contribute to the education of children and young people with visual impairment in Scotland

• Any future provision must be within our means to provide, in terms of its call on voluntary funds. Any service that forms part of a statutory obligation should be funded from statutory sources.

2.13 Because of the unsatisfactory nature of its present position, the Board’s view is that we should not wait overly long to set out its future course
clearly and plan for any necessary transition. After the Doran Review reports there will be further discussions and political processes before any changes become firm, but the Board wishes to be in a position to make such decisions within 2012 if there is a strong basis for doing so.

2.14 The Board therefore wishes to commission a fully researched and considered report as the basis for firm decisions regarding the shape of Royal Blind’s future contribution to VI education.

3. The Scope and Content of the Review

3.1 The scope of the research and analysis required is not fixed, and can be expected to develop through the course of the assignment as likely outcomes emerge and different areas of uncertainty become relevant.

3.2 The review should include:

- Careful consideration of likely future pupil numbers, age profiles and need profiles based on the current system and pattern of referral and the plans and expectations of present and potential purchasers of the service

- In-depth consideration of the various influences on referral to the school

- In-depth research, including interviews with key individuals in representative authorities as to stakeholder attitudes to the school and to differing options as to how we might provide services in future. In what circumstances do they refer pupils to the school at present, and in what circumstances might they refer pupils to the school in future?

- Analysis of data on the prevalence and distribution of children and young people with VI and the qualifications of those who teach them.

- Consider such possible referral patterns in the light of demographic changes and changes of incidence of VI to assess the size and shape of school roll that would result, including age ranges and concentrations, styles of curriculum, residential element and respite.

- Based on the research, put forward in detail one or more scenarios for the future services provided by the school, setting out clearly why the research points to that solution, and proposing the accommodation, staffing, etc that would most effectively deliver for the long term position which that scenario implies and a calculation and evaluation of the long term levels of costs and fees and thus the feasibility of each.

- Sketch out the process of transition that would most effectively and efficiently take the school to that point from its present position, having regard to the needs of current pupils and including operating
costs and revenues through the transitional period and any capital cost needs and/or property disposals.

4. **Resources**

4.1 The author of the review can call upon the assistance of members of the school staff and Head Office managers, such as the Finance Manager regarding budgeting, the Chief Executive regarding numbers projection and policy background, HR Manager regarding staff restructuring, Facilities Manager regarding accommodation options, costs and potential proceeds.

4.2 The Education Convener will be able to recommend and possibly facilitate some of the meetings and correspondence with key individuals in stakeholder authorities and organisations.

4.3 Accommodation and computer will be available at Gillespie Crescent and any reasonable travel etc expenses will be met.

5. **Reporting and Monitoring**

5.1 The author of the review will be under the management of the Chief Executive and will meet for regular updates and otherwise as necessary. The Convener of the Education Committee will be available for support and guidance, and will attend update meetings depending on availability.

5.2 An interim presentation will be held around the third week of February at which the author will be asked to update the Chairman, Education Convener and Chief Executive on early findings and the way the research seems at that stage to be pointing. This will enable confirmation of the general direction of the work, and also bring out any constraints or direct the remaining stages of the review.

5.3 The full report is required in draft by Friday 23 March for initial review by the Chief Executive. A second draft is then to be completed by 30 March for review by the Education Convener and the Chairman. The final report will be submitted to a meeting of the Education Committee in April and to the Board in June.
Appendix 2 - Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASD      Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASDAN    Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
ASN      Additional Support Needs
CALL     Communication, Access, Literacy learning Centre, Scotland
CIE      Curriculum for Excellence
CPD      Continuing Professional Development
CSP      Co-ordinated Support Plan

Curriculum Subjects:
CDT      Craft, Design and Technology
PD       Personal Development
PE       Physical Education
RME      Religious and Moral Education

CVI      Cerebral Visual Impairment
ETCS     Educating Through Care Scotland
fSDC     for Scotland’s Disabled Children
GASS     Grant Aided Special School/s
GIRFEC   Getting It Right for Every Child
HI       Hearing Impaired / Hearing Impairment
HMIE     Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education
HR       Human Resources
ICT      Information and Communication Technologies
IEP      Individualised Education Plan
ILS      Independent Living Skills

LA       Local Authority
LEA      Local Education Authority
MDVI     Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impairment
MISE     Mobility and Independence Specialists in Education
O&M      Orientation and Mobility - (O&M and ILS together are often referred to as Habilitation)

PMLD     Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
RNIB     Royal National Institute of Blind People
SAVIE    Scottish Association of Visual Impairment Educators
SCIS     Scottish Council of Independent Schools
SCOVI    Scottish Council on Visual Impairment
SEBD Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
SEN Special Education Needs (the term used for ASN in England)
SENSE SENSE Scotland is a national organisation for people who are deaf-blind
SQA Scottish Qualifications Authority
SSC Scottish Sensory Centre

Staff Roles:  CA Classroom Assistant
CEO Chief Executive Officer
DHoC Deputy Head of Care
DHT Depute Head Teacher
HoC Head of Care
NN Nursery Nurse
OT Occupational Therapist
Physio Physiotherapist
PT Principal Teacher
RCW Residential Care Worker
SaLT Speech and Language Therapist
SLT Senior Leadership Team
SRCW Senior Residential Care Worker

SVQ Scottish Vocational Qualifications
UKAAF United Kingdom Authority on Alternative Formats
VI Visual Impairment / Visually Impaired - VI encompasses a wide range of visual conditions resulting in impaired vision, from partial sight to blindness. It includes VI resulting from ocular and cerebral impairment.

Years of Schooling:
P1 – P7 Primary 1 to Primary 7
S1 – S6 Secondary 1 to Secondary 6
### Appendix 3 – Survey (Local Authority)

The following survey was sent to all Scottish LA’s and the other UK LA’s from which we have enrolled pupils. The Survey is referred to in chapters 2 and 4 of this report.

#### STRATEGIC REVIEW

##### Survey for Local Authorities

1. Over the next 5 years, how likely is it that you would place, at the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh, a pupil from your Local Authority who is a:

   (Please tick)

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Very unlikely</th>
<th>Somewhat unlikely</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Secondary pupil who is blind, a Braille user, with no ASN?</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary pupil with low vision who works in print and has no ASN?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary pupil with low vision who works in print and has no ASN?</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary pupil who has VI (Visual Impairment) and ASN?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary pupil who has VI (Visual Impairment) and ASN?</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary pupil who has MDVI (multiple disabilities and visual impairment)?</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary pupil who has MDVI (multiple disabilities and visual impairment)?</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
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2. How many pupils do you think you might potentially place at the Royal Blind School over the next 5 years?

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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>5 or more</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. If you have answered ‘very unlikely’ or ‘somewhat unlikely’ to any of the above, please indicate how important each of the following would be in your decision-making.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Local Authority has adequate facilities to meet this need.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ASL Act (Scotland) states a ‘presumption to mainstream’.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>The cost of provision at the Royal Blind School is too high.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are philosophically opposed to placing pupils in special schools.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young children should live at home with their families, rather than attending a boarding sch.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is better for children with disabilities to be enrolled in inclusive mainstream settings.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section not completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other / Comments (Paraphrased to shorten and grouped):

- Our principle is to base on the needs of the child (4 respondents)
- The issues are more complex than the tickbox method allows
- We raised some concerns about quality of provision with the school
- We look at local provision first and RBS is distant
- Prefer to educate at the local school and keep the child in their community
- We are pro inclusion
- RBS provided well for a pupil from here with social and behavioural challenges but could not sustain due to severity and could not provide weekend care
- We go for least intrusive and most inclusive
- All our VI pupils in the last 20 years have been kept within authority and we have good facilities
- We see RBS as supporting “one-offs” when our excellent VI service cannot deal with them
- Parental preference is taken into account
- Efficient use of resources is taken into account
- We aim to provide within our authority area and if we can’t we use adjacent LA’s
4. If you have answered ‘very likely’ or ‘somewhat likely’ to any of the above, please indicate how important each of the following would be in your decision-making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>No response to this q’n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Local Authority does not have adequate facilities to meet this need.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has a good reputation and history in the education of blind and visually impaired children and young people.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides weekly boarding facilities and respite care, allowing for the delivery of a 24 hour curriculum.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of provision at the Royal Blind School is an efficient way to meet the needs of VI learners.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Local Authority can sometimes best meet its statutory responsibilities through an out-of-area placement.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For some pupils, a special school is the best environment to meet a pupil’s individual needs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has teachers who are well qualified and experienced in visual impairment.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has the appropriate environment, equipment and resources to educate learners with visual impairment.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides a range of VI-specific training such as mobility (habilitation) and independent living skills.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people with disabilities should have the opportunity to meet and mix with others who have a similar disability.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has the expertise to teach Grade 2 Braille.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind Schools has strong links with universities for research and training.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has special expertise in MDVI eg: Canaan-Barrie signing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides integrated programmes of education, care, therapy and nursing.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section does not apply</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Authority: __________________________________________
Your Name: ____________________________________________ Your Role: _______________________
Contact: Phone: ___________________ Email: __________________________
Appendix 4 – Survey (Staff)

The following survey was sent to all staff of the Royal Blind School including all teachers, education support staff, residential care workers, therapists, nurses, administrative staff, ICT, domestic and facilities staff. The Survey is referred to in chapters 2 and 4 of this report.

STRATEGIC REVIEW

Survey for Local Authorities

1. What are the most important strengths of the Royal Blind School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Local Authority does not have adequate facilities to</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet pupils’ needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has a good reputation and history in</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the education of blind and visually impaired children and</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>young people.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides weekly boarding facilities and</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respite care, allowing for the delivery of a 24 hour curriculum.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School is focused on pupils’ individual needs.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides teachers who are well qualified</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and experienced in visual impairment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has the appropriate environment,</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipment and resources to educate learners with visual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>impairment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides a range of vision-specific</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training such as mobility (habilitation) and independent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>living skills.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Children and young people with disabilities should have the</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunity to meet and mix with others who have a similar</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>disability.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has the expertise to teach Grade 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braille.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind Schools has strong links with universities for</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research and training.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has special expertise in MDVI eg:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canaan-Barrie signing.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides integrated programmes of</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education, care, therapy and nursing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response this section</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other / Comments (Paraphrased to shorten and grouped):

Further strengths:
- Quality of care is high (2 respondents)
- We are specialist (2 respondents)
- Amount of therapy input. This is reducing elsewhere
- Links with local schools
- Committed staff with a wealth of experience
- Meets all Curriculum for Excellence criteria
- Strength in modern languages, often neglected for VI pupils
- Independence skills built in, not just an add-on
- Pupils when at school are normal, not different
- Individualised curriculum and support packages
- Excellent staff/pupil ratios

Qualifying comments:
- Not the most appropriate environment (2 respondents)
- We could strengthen links with universities (3 respondents)
- We need to ensure we have appropriate and well trained staff
- Support staff and care staff should do mobility training as CPD
- Canaan Barrie signing, while useful in school, is not widely used or understood outwit, so its value is limited.
- There is some scope to improve lesson content, avoiding repetitive tasks
- Independent living skills could be taught more intensively
- Braille training for staff should be mandatory
- We could improve the theoretical basis for our individual programmes
- We could include siblings in activities
2. Why do you think Local Authorities are reluctant to place pupils at the Royal Blind School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Local Authority has adequate facilities to meet this need.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ASL Act (Scotland) states a ‘presumption to mainstream’.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of provision at the Royal Blind School is too high.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are philosophically opposed to placing pupils in special schools.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They believe that young children should live at home with their families, rather than attending a boarding school.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They believe that it is better for children with disabilities to be enrolled in inclusive mainstream settings.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response to this section</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other / Comments (Paraphrased to shorten and grouped):

- Local authorities place in mainstream schools to save money (8 respondents)
- Local authorities view us as expensive, but their own costs are understated or they under-provide and our costs are reasonable (6 respondents)
- Children in mainstream schools are often/usually segregated from other pupils (2 respondents)
- Local authorities don’t inform parents about our school (2 respondents)
- Our service quality is better than most mainstream placements (3 respondents)
- Finance is a huge issue for LAs at present
- Historical stereotype of the institution
- LAs don’t appreciate the value of a strong and supportive peer group and knowledgeable and understanding staff
- Parental choice has insufficient weight
- LAs need to know what we offer
- We should adapt our approach to current thinking
3. What additional services would you like to see the Royal Blind School offer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Depends</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52 week a year care</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respite care on all weekends</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday programmes</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for parents</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family activities</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school tutoring</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend activities</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive training in Braille</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive training in Mobility</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More independent living skills training</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response to this section</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further suggestions (Paraphrased to shorten and grouped):

- Nursery (5 respondents)
- Quality leisure activities (2 respondents)
- Specialist activities and training (2 respondents)
- Open access services
- Community/hub concept
- VI assessment and low vision training suite
- Advise on educational implications of specific eye condition
- Offer expertise in VI/autism
- Lending library of resources
- Offer a VI experience for non-VI school pupils
- Outreach to maternity hospitals
- Outreach for transition
- Services for adults with recent sight loss
- Offer courses in ICT and assistive technology (2 respondents)
- Social training
- Schools for teachers, families (Texas example)
- Post-school training on independent living
- Let out premises during the summer break
- Career advice training and transition to college
- More living skills input for older Craigmillar Park pupils
• Offer a leavers' year for pupils who have been through mainstream with a strong living skills element
• Assessment service
• Family support/awareness raising officer

4. What strategies could we implement to provide the service at a lower cost?
   (Paraphrased to shorten and grouped)
   • Combine campuses (10 respondents)
   • Staff should pay for lunches/withdraw lunch provision (7 respondents)
   • Let out unused space (6 respondents)
   • Use staff flexibly between campuses and classes (5 respondents)
   • Reduce management structure/PTs/DHTs (4 respondents)
   • Would prefer to see superior service than lower cost (4 respondents)
   • Reduce food quantity and wastage (4 respondents)
   • Reduce daytime care staffing (3 respondents)
   • Increase pupil numbers (3 respondents)
   • Energy conservation, reduce paper usage and waste (3 respondents)
   • Reduce over-staffing (3 respondents)
   • Improve marketing and fundraising strategies
   • More staff placements and integration with mainstream
   • Part time subject teachers
   • Cut classroom staffing
   • Strategic planning and vision
   • Thorough review of costs
   • Emphasis and publicise expertise other than in VI
   • Offer a childcare service to staff
   • Expand adult services (2 respondents)
   • Dispense with nursery nurses
   • Increase training provider role
   • Offer workshops for staff from other schools
   • Flexible timetabling
- Inventory control of equipment
- Use existing staff for new activities we introduce
- Use multi-disciplinary teams and break inter-professional boundaries
- Music and art groups
- Employ our therapists directly
- Parents should bring their children to school to save an element of the local authority’s cost of placement
- Lower the heating thermostat settings
- Cut cleaning by 20%
- Use young people’s DLA benefit to fund independence training and weekend respite
- Involve parents in independence training
- Rota staff assistance with lunch
- Staff should cover for each other to cut use of supply arrangements

5. Describe what you think the Royal Blind School should look like in 5 years’ time. (Think about the pupil population, age range, disability type and mix, range of services).

- Offer a wide range of services (9 respondents)
- Adapted to, and reputed for, providing for additional support needs, autism behavioural and emotional issues with VI (9 respondents)
- Range of needs catered for is wider
- Smaller and on one campus (9 respondents)
- Smaller and on a wholly new campus (2 respondents)
- Residential provision fully integrates MDVI with the rest (2 respondents)
- Campuses more linked
- Merged with Donaldsons and co-located in Linlithgow
- Back to the full roll as it was 5 years ago (7 respondents)
- With more pupils than at present (5 respondents)
- Incorporating a nursery (7 respondents)
- Incorporating a post school college (7 respondents)
- Incorporating outreach services (6 respondents)
- Well publicised (6 respondents)
- Giving support and advice to families (3 respondents)
- Family worker in post (2 respondents)
- Pre-school home visits (3 respondents)
- Giving support advice and training to professionals (2 respondents)
- Skilled beyond just visual impairment
- Holiday respite service
- Non-pupils using holiday respite service
- Non-VI using holiday respite service
- Open to other disabilities (3 respondents)
- A place where people are listened to and appreciated
- Offering more adult services (3 respondents)
- Fully developed Kidscene service
- Holiday and weekend courses for VI children and young people who attend mainstream schools
- Child care service for staff (3 respondents)
- Using the cottage (respondent made several alternative suggestions)
- Better links with LA VI services (3 respondents)
- Higher international profile (3 respondents)
- Sponsoring pupils from developing countries
- Offering intensive independent living courses
- Using a new bottom-up flexible approach to timetabling
- Resource centre (2 respondents)
- National centre for habilitation
- Hub of an inclusive community forming lifetime relationships
- Unified multi-disciplinary approach
- For some kinds of pupil, more emphasis on life skills (2 respondents)
- Independent living opportunities for day pupils (2 respondents)
• Re-grown and revitalised, having gone through the same experience as has already happened in the US of movement away from, then back to, special schooling for VI.
• Using new ways of collaborating with local provision and movement between (2 respondents)
• Still in a leading role
• Primary section is now a general purpose fee-paying independent primary school with a small number of VI pupils
• Other Royal Blind service offer work experience and career opportunities
• Taster weeks/camps
• Has re-branded the classroom assistants as learning support and offers a broader training for them

Your Name: ______________________ Post: ______________________
Appendix 5 – Survey (Parents)

The following survey was sent to all parents of pupils currently enrolled at the Royal Blind School. The Survey is referred to in chapters 2 and 4 of this report.

STRATEGIC REVIEW

Survey for Parents and Carers

1. What are the most important considerations for enrolling your child at the Royal Blind School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Local Authority does not have adequate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilities to meet his/her needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has a good reputation and</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>history in the education of blind and visually</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>impaired children and young people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides weekly boarding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilities and respite care, allowing for the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>delivery of a 24 hour curriculum.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School is focused on my son/daughter's</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual needs.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has teachers who are well</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualified and experienced in visual impairment.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has the appropriate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment, equipment and resources to educate</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>learners with visual impairment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides a range of VI-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specific training such as mobility (habilitation) and</td>
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<tr>
<td>independent living skills.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people with disabilities should</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have the opportunity to meet and mix with others</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>who have a similar disability.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has the expertise to teach</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2 Braille.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind Schools has strong links with</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>universities for research and training.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School has special expertise in</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDVI eg: Canaan-Barrie signing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Blind School provides integrated</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programmes of education, care, therapy and nursing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other / Comments (Paraphrased to shorten and grouped):

- As a parent, the most important factors were:
  - The child would be given a proper education
  - Social and independence skills would be learned
  - The local authority was going to provide neither
- Our child had a horrendous time in mainstream. The RBS was the only school in Scotland that could provide
- Our son is encouraged to reach his full potential

2. Did you have to go through a tribunal to get your child enrolled at the Royal Blind School?

   Yes                                     -
   Almost - the Local Authority gave in just before the tribunal date   2
   No                                      4
3. Why do you think Local Authorities are reluctant to place pupils at the Royal Blind School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>No answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Local Authority has adequate facilities to meet this need.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ASL Act (Scotland) states a 'presumption to mainstream'.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>The cost of provision at the Royal Blind School is too high.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>They are philosophically opposed to placing pupils in special schools.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They believe that young children should live at home with their families, rather than attending a boarding school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They believe that it is better for children with disabilities to be enrolled in inclusive mainstream settings.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other / Comments (Paraphrased to shorten and grouped):

- We were never told by the LA what their reasons were
- Our son was in mainstream right through primary and they had no idea of his needs
- LAs use mainstream because they see it as the cheaper option
- LA does not have adequate facilities but parents are discouraged from looking elsewhere
- Parents don’t know that the presumption of mainstream can be overridden
- Local specialist provision is as expensive as RBS (parent has made an estimate)
- Inclusion does not mean integrated
- Mainstreaming does not work for all children
- The battle for placement at RBS was difficult. Threatened with child protection proceedings.
- Sending a child to board is hard, but has proved to be the right choice
4. What additional services would you like to see the Royal Blind School offer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Depends</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52 week a year care</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respite care on all weekends</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Holiday programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training for parents</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family activities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school tutoring</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive training in Braille</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive training in Mobility</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More independent living skills training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More young adult programmes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other suggestions and comments (Paraphrased to shorten and grouped):
- After School Club
- Mobility training should include parents and carers
- Family activities/ holiday programmes should include siblings (2 respondents)
- Very happy with all aspects of education at the school (3 respondents)
- Open up respite to non-VI to make it viable
- Training for parents by parents
- Opportunities to be with our son among his school friends
- Opportunity for prospective parents to meets and learn from parents of pupils now at the school

Your Name: __________________________ Child’s name: __________________________

Contact: Phone: __________________________ Email: __________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Please return it to the school office by 29 February 2012.
## Appendix 6 – Local Authority Survey Returns

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Replied</th>
<th>Did not reply</th>
<th>Pupils currently enrolled from this LA</th>
<th>Boarding pupils from this LA</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Argyll and Bute</td>
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<td>North Tyneside (England)</td>
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<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self funded</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 10
Appendix 7 – Canaan Lane Campus - Capital Works Required to Enable the School to Consolidate onto One Campus at Canaan Lane

School Building:

G13 – install door from corridor and lock door into G12
G20 – install door from corridor and block off access from G18 (locked door?)
G21/G22 – remove bathroom/toilet fittings and dividing wall. Refurbish as resource room for storage, photocopying, binding, etc (as resource room on mezzanine at Craigmillar Park)
G23 – build wall to divide classroom in 2. Install cupboard
G24 – remove walls of withdrawal room to open up classroom space and install door from corridor. Install cupboard
Courtyard 1 wall between G23 and G38 – install gates in the wall to enable deliveries to Science, CDT and Art rooms
G33 – install door from corridor into G34
G34 – install folding door/wall to separate room into CDT/Art rooms. Fit out each accordingly
G36 – install door to courtyard for deliveries. Fit out as CDT Preparation Room
G37 – fit out as Science Lab (document attached)
G38 – fit out as Science Preparation Room
G39 – install shelving for use as greenhouse
G40/G41 – strip out toilet facilities and re-fit as CDT store. Remove wall between G40 and G41
G49 – install wall to divide classroom into 2 rooms. Install door from corridor into G 49
G58 – replace bay window with folding door/wall and extend walls and roof out to occupy Courtyard 2 and create assembly hall/performance space with seating, storage, and accessible stage at western end. Fit out with seating, lighting and audio facilities.
G71 – install wall, door and cupboard to make this into a classroom
G73 – door to classroom to be lockable
G96/G97 – remove dividing wall, strip out lights equipment and re-house elsewhere (to be determined). Fit out G96/G97 as Business Studies classroom
G98 – strip out toilets and fit out room as ICT classroom – storage, workstations, computer points, group area
G99 – install wall and door to form a corridor and create a separate classroom space. Install cupboard.
G100, G101, G102 – install cupboards
G103 – Block off doorway from G102. Remove walls to G104
G104 – remove door and wall and replace with door from hallway
G105 – install folding door/wall and doorway to divide space into 2 rooms
G108 – install wall across waiting room and remove wall between G108 and G111
G111 – keep door to G112 locked
Opposite G111 – install full wall of shelving with lockable sliding doors for library storage

Bungalows:
1. Residential bungalows – redecorate upstairs areas to provide more bedrooms for ambulant pupils
2. Create secure entry so that one upstairs flat be used as parent accommodation?

Gate Lodge:
1. Gate Lodge – refurbish for use as an independent living skills flat providing wheelchair access, accessible toilet, bathroom and kitchen, laundry/utility room, 2 bedrooms and living room.
2. External to gate lodge – create garden plots for vocational and enterprise activities and parking for school buses

Front Building:
3. Install lift to access loft space and develop this as training rooms – reception desk, 2 accessible toilets, kitchen for serving teas and lunches - (boiling water refrigerator, dishwasher, sink, storage cupboards, power points) and training rooms divided by folding partitions to give flexible arrangement of small and large rooms. Need computer phone connections.
4. Install floor over old hydrotherapy pool to house common room / Swish table. Furnish with lounge suite and TV.
5. Residential multi-purpose room – furnish as coffee shop and install reception desk and kitchenette (for teas and coffees – (boiling water, cooker, refrigerator, dishwasher, sink, hand-washing basin, storage cupboards, power points)

**Exterior:**
Fence from G23 to residential buildings ) to enclose play area
Fence from G99 to residential buildings )
Surface and mark 4/5 additional parking bays at eastern end of building