

ANGUS COUNCIL

At a MEETING of the **EDUCATION COMMITTEE** held in The Town and County Hall, Forfar on Wednesday 20 December 1995 at 5.30 pm.

Present: Councillors BRIAN M C MILNE, HELEN ANGUS, Mrs SHEENA WELSH, Mrs RENATE LAMONT, JOHN GIBB, Mrs GLENNIS MIDDLETON, Mrs FRANCES E DUNCAN, SANDY WEST, GEORGE NORRIE, KATHLEEN RITCHIE, GEORGE ALLAN, Rev Dr R MACKENZIE and Mrs E HOWSON.

Councillor MILNE, Convener, in the Chair.

Prior to the commencement of business, the Convener welcomed Mrs Elizabeth Howson to her first meeting of the Education Committee as the third Church representative.

1. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 November 1995 was accepted as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

2. DEVOLVED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

There was submitted Report No AC183/95 by the Director of Education setting out the progress which had been made by Tayside Regional Council in phasing in the implementation of Devolved School Management (DSM) in Angus.

The Committee noted that since April 1994, 20 primary schools and 4 secondary schools in Angus had been operating within the DSM scheme and that 5 secondary schools, 20 large primary schools and 23 small primary schools in Angus were not yet participating in the scheme. The details of the DSM scheme currently being operated by Tayside Regional Council were set out in the Report.

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed:-

- (1) to approve, in principle, the scheme of Devolved School Management currently being operated by Tayside Regional Council, subject to ongoing review, and subject to the Council being able to make adequate financial resources available;
- (2) to instruct the Director of Education to take all reasonable steps to phase in the implementation of the scheme for all Angus schools as quickly as possible and specifically to plan for the involvement of all primary and secondary schools with rolls of 110 or more in 1996/97, on the understanding that the additional staffing requirements for these schools could be contained in the base Revenue Budget for the Education Department 1996/97, and subject to the Council being able to make adequate financial resources available; and
- (3) to note the possibility of a service development bid being considered by the Council during its deliberations in regard to the 1996/97 Revenue Budget, that bid being designed to give detailed costings of the implementation of DSM to as many Angus schools as possible with effect from April 1996.

3. JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (TEACHERS) - MEMBERSHIP

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of the Education Committee of 22 November 1995, there was submitted Report No AC198/95 by the Director of Education indicating that, after discussion with the relevant Teacher Associations, it had been agreed that there would be seven teacher representatives on the JCC (Teachers) - 4 nominated by the EIS, 1 by the SSTA, 1 by the PAT and 1 by the NAS/UWT. Accordingly, the Committee now required to nominate seven representatives from among its own membership to serve on the JCC.

The Committee noted the terms of the Report and agreed to appoint Councillors Brian Milne, Wallie Leask, Mrs Frances E Duncan, Helen Angus, Mrs Sheena Welsh, Sandy West and George Norrie as its representatives on the Joint Consultative Committee (Teachers).

4. OUT-OF-SCHOOL CARE

There was submitted Report No AC185/95 by the Director of Education regarding the proposed arrangements for caring for children outwith normal school hours, usually between the end of the school day and 6.00pm for 5 days per week and on a full-time basis for five days per week during school holiday periods.

Tayside Regional Council had worked in close partnership with Scottish Enterprise Tayside (SET), which had the task of disbursing monies made available by central government for start-up costs for Out-of-School Care Clubs. Eight clubs were fully operation or in an advanced stage of planning across Angus, in Arbroath, Birkhill, Brechin, Forfar, Kirriemuir, Letham, Monifieth and Montrose, all but one of which operated in Education Department premises, the premises at Letham Primary School being unsuitable.

The Report proposed that Angus Council should promote and support schemes offering Out-of-School Care in as many venues within its boundaries as possible. The level of interest currently displayed suggested that this could best be achieved by offering help and support in a variety of ways to locally based groups which satisfied certain criteria.

It was suggested that, given the positive experience of Tayside Regional Council in addressing Out-of-School Care on a corporate basis, there would be merit in Angus Council forming a steering group, with the ability to co-opt appropriate representatives from outside bodies onto the group whenever possible and relevant. It was also indicated that the current initiative had been facilitated by the ability of SET to provide substantial sums to new schemes, specifically to cover start-up costs. However, the central government funding which had enabled SET to disburse these monies seemed likely to come to an end during the current financial year, and there was no likelihood of additional money being made available to Angus Council to support new ventures in this way. Nevertheless, the proposals detailed in the Report could be undertaken within the resources available in the Education Department's likely revenue budget for 1996/97.

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed:-

- (1) to note that, within the Council's scheme for letting of school premises, any bona fide community group offering Out-of-School Care would normally be granted a free let of part of an educational building;
- (2) to approve, in principle, the proposal that workers in approved schemes be offered the opportunity to participate in training organised by Angus Council employees; and
- (3) to instruct the Director of Education to work in collaboration with colleagues in other departments of the Council, particularly the Council's Policy Officer, and the Social Work Department, and with other agencies with a legitimate interest in Out-of-School Care with a view to building a supportive and systematic network for Out-of-School Care throughout Angus.

5. NORMALISATION OF TVEI - SCHOOL BASED STAFF

There was submitted Report No AC186/95 by the Director of Education regarding the position of temporary and permanent amendments to the staffing enhancements in secondary schools which had been put in place as part of the Tayside Regional Council's TVEI (Technical and Vocational Education Initiative) Project.

The main objectives of the project were to enable young people to learn to be effective, enterprising and capable at work through active and practical learning methods. The project assisted schools to meet some of the fundamental objectives contained in the guidance published by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum for learning and teaching in the middle and senior stages of Scottish secondary schools.

The TVEI programme had been implemented in Angus secondary schools in two phases, the first phase of which finished in June 1995 and had involved five schools, and the second phase of which was due to finish in 1996 and involved three 6-year secondary schools.

To enable the developments to take place, Tayside Regional Council's TVEI project had been supported by the temporary allocation of staffing enhancements to each 6-year secondary school.

While Scottish Office funding had been available to Tayside's TVEI project to partially offset some of the costs of the above staffing enhancement, but this funding would cease completely in July 1996. It was accordingly felt that it would be appropriate for the Committee to consider whether the TVEI related staffing enhancements should be continued or otherwise and options were set out in the Report.

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed that the following proposals be approved as the basis for consultation with the Joint Consultative Committee (Teachers), and that the Director of Education be instructed to report back to the Committee on the results of the consultation at an early date:-

- (1) that the existing additional 0.5 (full-time equivalent) teacher staffing allocation be retained in all 6-year secondary schools, but that the additional allowance of 0.3 (FTE) for TVEI be discontinued with effect from Angus 1996 in all schools; and
- (2) that either the additional temporary post of Assistant Rector or the additional temporary Guidance post(s) be discontinued, but that the views of secondary head teachers be specifically sought on the relative priority of these two types of post.

At this point Councillor West declared an interest in the following matter and left the meeting during its consideration.

6. PROVISION OF SCHOOL CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

There was submitted Report No AC187/95 by the Director of Education indicating that education authorities provided grants towards the provision of school clothing and footwear under Section 54 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to parents in receipt of Family Income Support.

Tayside Regional Council had paid these grants in the form of vouchers which could be exchanged at shops which participated in that authority's School Clothing and Footwear Contract. Participating suppliers returned the exchanged vouchers to the authority together with an invoice for the actual goods received and payment was made to the supplier, less any discount agreed as part of the contract. However, there were concerns that, while the contract arrangements secured discounts from the suppliers, these were largely offset by the cost of administering, recording, issuing and redeeming vouchers.

The vouchers reduced the recipients' flexibility to shop around for the best value for money and, although they had been introduced to ensure that clothing grants were spent on school clothing, the current system could be abused. Accordingly, it was proposed to move to the issue of cash giro which would limit the cost of printing vouchers, controlling their issue and monitoring their encashment. However, savings would need to be offset against the discount which was currently received from suppliers, although it was anticipated that, ultimately, the savings would be balanced by the loss of discount and the financial implications of the change for the Council would be broadly neutral.

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed:-

- (1) that from 1 April 1996 grants to parents who qualified for assistance with the provision of school clothing and footwear should be paid in the form of cash giro;
- (2) that the Director of Education be authorised to advise interested suppliers of the decision; and
- (3) to note that the financial effect of the change would be broadly neutral.

7. PROMOTED POSTS IN SCHOOLS

There was submitted Report No AC188/95 by the Director of Education describing the current Tayside Regional Council arrangements for the filling of promoted post vacancies and setting out possible arrangements for adoption by Angus Council, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the Report, subject to consultation with the JCC (Teachers).

The Committee approved the terms of the Report and agreed:-

- (1) to note that COSLA was to issue guidance on the involvement of elected members in interviews, and that pending consideration of such guidance, a member of the Education Committee be involved in all interview panels for posts down to the level of Assistant Principal Teacher;
- (2) that otherwise the composition of interview panels for promoted posts be as detailed in Appendix 3 to the Report;
- (3) that the proposals be subject to consultation with the Joint Consultative Committee (Teachers); and
- (4) that the Director of Education should report back at an early date on the result of this consultation.

8. FURTHER EDUCATION BURSARIES

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of the Education Committee of 22 November 1995, there was submitted Report No AC189/95 by the Director of Education indicating that, in spite of the representations made by Angus Council and by COSLA regarding the announcement by the Secretary of State that he proposed to transfer responsibility for further education bursaries from education authorities to Further Education Colleges with effect from 1 April 1996, the Secretary of State had confirmed his decision on 7 December 1995. A copy of the formal letter from the Scottish Office together with a press release was attached to the Report.

The Committee noted the position.