

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of FIRST MEETING of the **EDUCATION COMMITTEE** held in The Town and County Hall, Forfar on Wednesday 27 September 1995 at 5.30 pm.

Present: Councillors BRIAN M C MILNE, WALLIE B LEASK, RICHARD B SPEIRS, HELEN ANGUS, SHEENA WELSH, Mrs RENATE LAMONT, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, Mrs FRANCES E DUNCAN, SANDY WEST, GEORGE NORRIE, KATHLEEN RITCHIE, GEORGE ALLAN, Rev Dr R MACKENZIE and Rev M MILTON

Councillor MILNE, Convener, in the Chair.

Before commencing the business, the Convener welcomed to the meeting, Rev Dr Robin Mackenzie and Rev Michael Milton who had recently been appointed as the representatives on the Committee of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church respectively.

1. **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 23 August 1995 was accepted as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

2. **GUIDANCE ON EDUCATION PROVISIONS AND PRINCIPAL STATUTES**

There was submitted, for information, SOED Circular No 5/95 outlining guidance to the unity authorities on education legislation generally, the sections of the Local Government Etc (Scotland) Act 1994 which related specifically to education, and other aspects of education provision, together with a document entitled "Principal Statutes" produced by the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, listing, in general terms, the main statutory duties and powers of an education authority.

The Committee noted, for its interest, the contents of the Circular and the ADES document.

3. **SOED CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF SCOTTISH PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION: THE ANGUS COUNCIL RESPONSE**

There was submitted Joint Report No AC79/95 by the Director of Education and the Director of Social Work, setting out a response to the proposals made in the Scottish Office Education Department's consultation paper entitled "The Future of Scottish Pre-School Education" and recommending that the Report be endorsed as Angus Council's response to the proposals. The Report outlined some background to developments in nursery education in Tayside to date. Although the SOED consultation paper posed a number of questions and sought detailed responses to these questions, the Report responded to wider and more comprehensive issues than those posed by the questions in the consultation paper but an indication was given in the Report where specific responses addressed the SOED questions.

The response was due to be made by 4 October 1995 and it was regretted that the short timescale did not allow for a full and meaningful consultation to take place in an area of great public interest and concern which was of enormous importance to the future education of the Angus children.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to endorse the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to submit the Report to SOED as the considered response from Angus Council;
- (iii) to confirm that, in the light of this Report, Angus Council would not wish to participate in the proposed pilot phase of the scheme in 1996/97;
- (iv) to refer the Report to the Education Committee of Tayside Regional Council for its interest with a recommendation that every opportunity be taken to promote the quality and availability of pre-fives' school provision provided by the local authority; and

- (v) to instruct the Directors of Education and Social Work to consider means whereby a wider consultation involving parents, carers and staff might be carried out on the future of pre-school provision in Angus in the context of the SOED proposals and the Council's response.

4. THE LOCAL CAPITAL GRANTS SCHEME

There was submitted Report No AC78/95 by the Director of Education advising that Angus Council had been asked by the Scottish Office Education Department to indicate by 1 October 1995 whether it wished to participate in the Local Capital Grants Scheme in 1996/97 and if so, how much in terms of financial assistance it was prepared to contribute towards projects in 1996/97.

A central aim of the Scheme was that at least 70% of expenditure should be on projects in rural areas. Grants were payable on eligible costs up to an upper limit of £200,000 for a single project. SOED would meet 50% of the eligible project cost with the applicant organisation and local authority each meeting 25%. Grants were available in respect of expenditure on, for example, adaptations to buildings, purchase of land and buildings and energy conservation measures.

While there were no projects within Angus in 1995/96, there were two potential projects for financial year 1996/97. At this stage neither of the projects was at a stage where a submission could be made to The Scottish Office. However, should both projects proceed, the cost to Angus Council would not exceed £18,000.

The Director concluded that the Scheme had been successful in enabling community based projects to proceed and it was expected that these benefits would also accrue to Angus Council.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve, in principle, Angus Council participating in the Local Capital Grants Scheme at a cost of up to £18,000 in 1996/97;
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Education to nominate an appropriate representative as the recommended officer to liaise with the Scottish Office Education Department on the implementation of the scheme; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Education to bring forward a further Report on proposed capital grants for the Financial Year 1996/97.

5. DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

There was submitted Report No AC77/95 by the Director of Education describing some of the key features of development planning which were currently influencing the education service in Angus, and recommending that a Development Plan for the education service in Angus from 1996 onward should become one of the principal vehicles for realising the Council's strategic aims.

The Committee noted the terms of the Report and instructed the Director of Education to build on the work which had been taking place within the education service in Angus in order to devise a Development Plan for the approval of the Education Committee, to be effective from April 1996.

6. LIAISON ARRANGEMENTS ON EDUCATION ISSUES

(a) School Boards

The Convener reported that a meeting would be held on Wednesday 22 November 1995 in Forfar Academy, immediately following the Education Committee meeting due to be held that evening, between Committee members and representatives of the School Boards in Angus. Schools without School Boards would also be asked to send representatives to the meeting.

(b) Neighbouring Authorities

The Convener reported that the Conveners and Vice-Conveners of the Education Committee of the three unitary authorities in Tayside had agreed to meet on Wednesday 15 November 1995, to discuss issues of mutual interest.

The Committee noted the position.

7. PARENTAL PLACING REQUESTS IN ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

There was submitted letter dated 30 August 1995 from the Director of Law and Administration, Tayside Regional Council, together with Report No 1166/95 by that Council's Director of Education detailing the current policy on parental placing requests. The representative of the Roman Catholic Church on the Education Committee had requested that consideration be given to amending the current position so far as affecting Roman Catholic schools, with a view to ensuring that some priority be given to Roman Catholic children wishing to attend Roman Catholic schools. The Regional Council's Education Committee had approved the recommendations contained in Report No 1166/95 and Angus Council, as one of the successor education authorities, had been asked if it were prepared to support the proposed amendment to the policy.

Having noted that the Regional Council would require to publicise the proposals and undertake a consultation exercise in terms of the Education (Publication and Consultation Etc) (Scotland) Regulations 1991, the Committee agreed to support to principle the proposals contained in Report 1166/95.

8. AVROM HOUSE, DUNDEE - PROVISION FOR PREGNANT SCHOOLGIRLS AND SCHOOLGIRL MOTHERS

There was submitted letter dated 31 August 1995 from the Director of Law and Administration, Tayside Regional Council, together with Report No 1170/95 by the Regional Council's Director of Education, which had been approved by the Regional Council's Education Committee on 22 August 1995, containing proposals for the Avrom House provision to be relocated at a building in Seafield Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee on the campus of Grove Academy. The Report detailed measures to offer every young pregnant school pupil of 16 years or over a series of specifically designed education tutorials which would assist them to review their academic career and personal situation.

The Committee approved the proposals in Report 1170/95 for its interest and agreed that Angus pupils should continue to use the facilities on terms to be agreed with Dundee City Council in due course.

9. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC - ITEM RELATING TO EXEMPT BUSINESS

The Committee resolved that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item so as to avoid the disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

10. THE CAREERS SERVICE IN TAYSIDE

With reference to Article 15 (Angus Council, 16 August 1995), there was submitted Report No AC89/95 by the Director of Education indicating that officers of Tayside Regional Council had prepared a bid to provide the Careers Service in Tayside from 1996 to 2001, in consultation with officers of Angus Council, and that it was likely that a special meeting of the Regional Council's Education Committee would be held before 31 October 1995 to give final consideration to the Bid.

It was also reported that the Careers Service presently occupied or shared occupation of various accommodation throughout Angus and provisionally wished to continue their occupation after 1 April 1996 when these properties would vest in Angus Council as Tayside Regional Council's unitary successor. In order to progress this matter, officers would require to commence discussions with Regional Council officers.

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

- (i) to endorse, for its interest, Tayside Regional Council's bid to provide the Careers Service in Tayside from 1996 to 2001 and to authorise the Chief Executive to write a letter of support to the Regional Council's Chief Executive for inclusion with the bid when submitted to the Scottish Office; and
- (ii) to authorise officers to engage in discussions with Regional Council officers regarding the Careers Service's continued occupation of the properties listed in the Report, after 1 April 1996.