

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **EDUCATION COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 21 January 2003 at 4.00 pm.

Present: Councillors BRIAN MILNE, SHEENA WELSH, Provost Mrs FRANCES E DUNCAN OBE, Councillors JACK GIBB, DAVID LUMGAIR, STEWART McGLYNN, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, ROBERT MYLES, PETER NIELD, GEORGE NORRIE MBE, KITTY RITCHIE, RON SCRIMGEOUR and SANDY WEST, Rev ALAN WEBSTER, Mr PETER ANDREWS and Mr BRIAN McHARDY.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Father JAMES FOLEY and Rev KENNETH GIBSON.

Councillor MILNE, Convener, in the Chair.

1. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The [minute of meeting of this Committee of 26 November 2002](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

(b) Angus Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

The minute of meeting of Angus Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers of [9 December 2002](#), a copy of which was appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

(c) Staffing Sub-Committee

The [minute of meeting of the Staffing Sub-Committee of 18 December 2002](#), a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX II**).

The Director of Law and Administration reported on the meeting of the [Staffing Sub-Committee held earlier this day](#). The Committee noted the decision as set out in the minute, a copy of which is appended hereto (**APPENDIX III**).

2. ROSYTH-ZEEBRUGGE FERRY SERVICE

The Committee was advised that Andrew Welsh, MSP had written to the Director of Education drawing his attention to the Rosyth-Zeebrugge Ferry Service and suggesting that schools should be encouraged to consider making use of this service when planning any trips abroad.

The Committee agreed to instruct the Director of Education to write to Head Teachers to raise awareness of this service and offer encouragement to schools in Angus to make use of it.

3. BEST VALUE REPORTS: SUPPORT SERVICES

There was submitted [Report No 104/03](#) by the Director of Education drawing the Committee's attention to recently completed Best Value Reports on the Community Education Service, the Educational Development Service, the Educational Psychology Service and the School and Family Support Service.

The Report indicated that all four Support Services were located within Bruce House, Arbroath and had been reviewed over the same timescale. The Council's Monitoring Group had approved, for its interest, each of the four Best Value Reports, copies of which were available for perusal in the Members' Lounge. The Report commented that all four Support Services provided high quality service in a number of specialised areas and customer surveys and benchmarking information had suggested that Angus was well served by staff working within them. This view was borne out by evaluations by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education.

In order to encourage joint working between the services, it had been felt that all four reports should be published simultaneously and the Report set out in Appendices, extracts of the Evaluations and Conclusions of the Best Value Reviews, together with Improvement Plans for the four Support Services.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the terms of the Report;
- (ii) to note and commend the efforts made by a number of staff in bringing together the reports; and
- (iii) to approve the Improvement Plans appended to the Report for the following Support Services within the Education Department:-
 - Community Education Service (Appendix 1)
 - Educational Development Service (Appendix 2)
 - Education Psychology Service (Appendix 3)
 - School and Family Support Service (Appendix 4).

4. INSPECTION OF THE EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OF ANGUS COUNCIL: PROGRESS REPORT

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 11 June 2002, there was submitted [Report No 105/03](#) by the Director of Education reminding the Committee that the Council had published a "Follow Up" Action Plan to take account of the HMIE recommendations following the recent inspection of the Education Service and reporting on the positive progress which had been made in taking forward all five strands of the Action Plan.

The Appendices to the Report detailed progress on the five strands of the Action Plan, provided guidance on a Policy Development and Review Framework and set out a Quality Improvement Policy Statement on the quality of education in Angus schools.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the summary of progress on the Follow-Up Action Plan to the HMIE Report on the education functions of Angus Council set out in Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (ii) to approve, in principle, the proposed Policy Development and Review Framework set out in Appendix 2 to the Report; and
- (iii) to endorse the proposed Quality Improvement Policy Statement set out in Appendix 3 to the Report and note that related guidelines would also be published.

5. PERFORMANCE INFORMATION AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS

With reference to Articles 6 and 3 of the minutes of meetings of this Committee of 11 June 2002 and 15 October 2002, respectively, there was submitted [Report No 106/03](#) by the Director of Education drawing the Committee's attention to the continued focus by the Education Department on different areas of attainment and success achieved by Angus schools, staff and pupils.

The Report set out information on the 5 - 14 attainment levels in Angus compared with averages for Scotland and the six local authorities in the comparator group whose socio-economic profile was closest to that of Angus. The Report also analysed the follow up to the HMIE Inspections of three Angus schools in December 2002 and indicated that, whilst no further visits would be required by HMIE in connection with two schools, a further visit would be made to one of the schools. In addition, the Report highlighted those schools, pupils and young people who had achieved noteworthy success for the period October 2002 to January 2003.

After the Director of Education had answered questions on the support given to schools in relation to the HMIE visits and given assurances regarding progress being made, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF A PARENTAL ADVICE AND CONCILIATION SERVICE

With reference to Article 4 above and Articles 6 and 3 of the minutes of meeting of this Committee of 11 June and 15 October 2002 respectively, there was submitted [Report No 107/03](#) by the Director of Education setting out a rationale for the establishment of a service specifically designed to address issues of concern to individual parents.

The Report indicated that the follow up Action Plan to the HMIE Inspection Report had included a commitment to develop a parental advice and conciliation service. Research had suggested that there was a high level of "customer satisfaction" with the Angus education service. However, in today's society, it had become essential that citizens should be given the opportunity to raise complaints or concerns about public services and that those same services should have adequate procedures in place to investigate and address all legitimate complaints/concerns which were raised.

The Report set out the aims of the proposed conciliation service, explained how that service would work and detailed in Section 7, the proposed staffing levels and recruitment procedures.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve, in principle, the concept of a parental advice and conciliation service, as described in the body of the Report;
- (ii) to authorise the Director of Education to second a suitably qualified dedicated member of staff from her/his post to the temporary post of Principal Officer (Advice and Conciliation) at a salary equivalent to that of an Educational Advisor/Quality Improvement Officer and with the same terms and conditions as an Advisor/ Quality Improvement Officer, secondment being for an initial period of no more than 23 months; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Education to report back to this Committee on the work of the successful secondee by November 2004.

7. DRAFT EDUCATION (PUPIL RECORDS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS

There was submitted [Report No 109/03](#) by the Director of Education advising the Committee of the publication of draft regulations which were to be made under Section 4 of the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 and seeking the Committee's approval for the officer response to these draft regulations.

The Report indicated that specific aim of the draft regulations was to reinstate an independent right for parents in Scotland to access their children's school education records and proposed that this amendment to the primary legislation be welcomed as it would provide much needed clarification in this area.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the terms of the Report;
- (ii) to note the draft regulations set out in Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (iii) to approve the officer response to the draft regulations set out in the Appendix 2 to the Report.

8. SEED RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE REVIEW GROUP: CONSULTATION PAPER

There was submitted [Report No 110/03](#) by the Director of Education drawing the Committee's attention to an SEED consultation exercise on Religious Observance in Scottish Schools and seeking the Committee's approval of a proposed response to the consultation exercise.

The Report indicated that Scottish Executive Ministers had established a review of Religious Observance in Scottish Schools and that this review was being taken forward by a group of relevant representatives from education and religious interests. The consultation paper prepared by the Religious Observance Review Group was attached as Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Report set out in Appendix 2, the proposed response from Angus Council to the Consultation Paper, which had been put together by a small Officer Group.

Having noted that Rev. Webster had expressed his support for the Angus Council response to the consultation paper, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the terms of the SEED Consultation Paper set out in Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (ii) to endorse the proposed response set out in Appendix 2.

9. ALEXANDER MACHARDY LAW BURSARY FUND

There was submitted [Report No 111/03](#) by the Director of Law and Administration advising that the Trustees of the Alexander MacHardy Law Bursary Fund had requested that the Council vary the terms of the Scheme by which the Fund was administered as the purposes of the original Trust had become too narrow and the income was no longer sufficient to implement its terms. The proposed variation would transfer the assets to the Angus Educational Trust to continue to be applied to educational purposes and thereby wind up the Alexander MacHardy Law Bursary Fund.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the Trustees' request that the Council should undertake the reorganisation of the administration of the Alexander MacHardy Law Bursary Fund;
- (ii) to approve the draft scheme to amend the administration of the Fund and draft explanatory memorandum annexed to the Report;
- (iii) to authorise the Director of Law and Administration to publicise and circulate the draft scheme; and
- (iv) to note that the Director of Law and Administration would report back in due course with the result of such consultation.

10. ANGUS BOOK AWARD 2003

With reference to Article 16 of the minute of meeting of the Recreation and Cultural Services Committee of 16 January 2003, there was submitted [Joint Report No 78/03](#) by the Director of Leisure Services and the Director of Education detailing the continuing development and success of the Angus Book Award (which had been launched in 1996) and the proposed arrangements for the Award in the current year.

The Report indicated that this year's award had been launched in schools at the beginning of January 2003 and reading of the five short-listed titles was already under way. An outline of the books, together with some biographical information about the authors, was attached as an appendix to the Report. Following the success of the new timing last year, the Award ceremony would take place in the summer term on Tuesday 20 May 2003 in Kirriemuir Town Hall. The authors of the short-listed titles, participating pupils, teachers, representatives of the wider school community and representatives of the Youth Congress would be invited, together with members and officers of the Council.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed to note the contents of the Report.

11. ISSUE OF TENDERS TO ESTABLISH AN SVQ ASSESSMENT CENTRE FOR PROVISION OF EARLY YEARS CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION IN ANGUS

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of meeting of this Social Work Committee of 14 January 2003, there was submitted [Joint Report No 61/03](#) by the Director of Education and the Director of Social Work advising the Committee of the development, led by Angus Childcare Partnership, of an SVQ Assessment Centre in Angus to provide SVQ II and III in Early Years Care and Education and D32/33 Assessor awards for private and voluntary sector daycare and education providers and childminders. It also reported on the responses received to advertisements seeking expressions of interest from potential training providers.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the report;
- (ii) to issue of tender documents to the applicants noted in the Report; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and the Director of Education to report back to the Committee on tenders received.

12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee resolved, in terms of Standing Order 27(2), that the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following items so as to avoid the possible disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 paragraphs 1, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10.

13. MONITORING PUPIL PROGRESS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

There was submitted [Report No 108/03](#) by the Director of Education advising the Committee of arrangements being made to extend to all Angus Primary Schools the use of Standardised Tests in P1, P3 and P5 as part of the Early Intervention Programme. The Programme aimed to raise standards of pupil attainment in primary schools in both literacy and numeracy and had been piloted in 18 "focus" schools in Angus. These schools had recently been reviewed and it was recommended that standardised testing be introduced to all primary schools in Angus and that a unified standardised testing regime be adopted as detailed in the Report.

The Report concluded that the adoption of a standardised testing system would be likely to enhance the effectiveness of both primary schools and the authority in monitoring and managing pupil attainment data and would support current efforts to raise standards of pupil attainment in both literacy and numeracy in line with expectations set out in National Priority 1.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the terms of the Report;
- (ii) to note the arrangements for standardised tests in primary schools which had been set in place as part of the Early Intervention Project;
- (iii) to note the proposals to extend, on a phased basis, to all primary schools the use of standardised tests in P1, P3 and P5 as detailed in the Report; and
- (iv) to approve, due to the specialist nature of the supply of standardised testing equipment and materials, exemption from normal tender procedures in accordance with Financial Regulation 16.1.3b(ii).

14. REVENUE GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2002/2003

With reference to Article 17(a) of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 11 June 2002, there was submitted [Report No 112/03](#) by the Director of Education detailing applications received from local Voluntary Organisations for Revenue Grants over £500 and making recommendations regarding the awards.

The Committee agreed to approve grants, totalling £9,778, to the Brechin Youth Project, the Café Project and 1st Barry/Carnoustie Scout Group, as detailed in the body of the Report and appendix.

15. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY ALCOHOL FREE ENVIRONMENT (CAFÉ) PROJECT, ARBROATH

With reference to Article 14 above, there was submitted [Report No 113/03](#) by the Director of Education recommending to the Committee the establishment of a Service Level Agreement with the Community Alcohol Free Environment (CAFÉ) Project, in Arbroath. The Report indicated that the relationship between the Council and Café Project had developed to a point where a more formal Service Level Agreement would represent the most appropriate vehicle for defining the future partnership arrangements and an Agreement had been created which clearly defined the outcomes which the Café Project would be required to deliver in return for funding from the Council. A copy of the Agreement was appended to the Report

The Committee agreed to approve the creation of a Service Level Agreement with the Community Alcohol Free Environment (CAFÉ) Project, covering the period 1 January 2003 - 31 March 2004, as set out in Appendix to the Report, at a total cost of £17,158.00.

Rev Webster joined the meeting at this point.

16. EDZELL PRIMARY SCHOOL REPLACEMENT

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 15 October 2002, there was submitted [Joint Report No 114/03](#) by the Director of Education and the Director of Property Services outlining proposals to replace the existing Edzell Primary School at a new site within the village and detailing the various options and property transactions regarding the construction of the new school.

Having heard Councillor Myles, local member, welcome the proposal to replace the existing school, the Committee, for its interest, agreed to approve the replacement of Edzell Primary School with a new build school with capacity for 100 primary school pupils comprising four classrooms, nursery provision, gymnasium, dining hall, general purposes area and other ancillary accommodation (as outlined in Option 4) and the detailed recommendations listed in the Report.