

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

23 April 1996

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Report No 192/96

CLOVA PRIMARY SCHOOL

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee undertake a formal consultation exercise within the terms of The Education (Publication and Consultation Etc) (Scotland) Regulations 1981, as amended, on a proposal that Clova Primary School be closed with effect from August 1996, and that the delineated area of Cortachy Primary School be varied to include the current delineated area of Clova Primary School

BACKGROUND

Clova Primary School is the smallest school in Angus. It has, for many years been a one-teacher school and although its roll has fluctuated in the same way as all school rolls fluctuate, there has nonetheless been a steady decline in pupil numbers over a period of several years. In the current school session, there are two pupils in the school, one of whom is in Primary 7, and moves on to secondary school in August 1996. This will leave one Primary 5 pupil in the school in session 1996/97, and there are no pre-school age children known to the education authority who are scheduled to commence their schooling next session, nor indeed are there any pre-school aged children living within the delineated area of the school at present.

To benefit from attendance at school, children require some peer group contact both in terms of their personal and social development, and also in terms of fully attaining their cognitive development potential. Whilst it is difficult to give a firm number of pupils below which a school is unable to provide an effective education for its pupils, there is absolutely no doubt that a school serving only one pupil would not be an arrangement which would be in the best interests of that pupil.

Given the likelihood of this situation arising, I have visited Clova Primary School and have discussed the situation with the Head Teacher, and with the parents of the child concerned. Whilst there is a quite natural sadness at the prospect of Clova Primary School closing, there would appear to be a realisation of the untenable situation in which the school would find itself next session were it to be allowed to remain open.

PROPOSAL

In all the circumstances, I would strongly recommend that Clova Primary School be closed. The delineated area of Clova Primary School would transfer to be incorporated into the delineated area of Cortachy Primary School. Members should be aware that, if the education authority does wish to close a school, then it requires

to enter into a consultation exercise as prescribed in The Education (Publication and Consultation, Etc) (Scotland) Regulations 1981, as amended. This exercise would enable the parents of the child concerned to make their views known more formally, and these views could then be taken into consideration. A further Committee Report would be brought forward in June of this year to allow the Committee to take a further decision, based on the outcome of the consultation exercise. The Committee should also be aware that, once the consultation exercise is complete, and should there be a decision taken in principle to close Clova Primary School then the consent of the Secretary of State would be required given the remote nature of Clova Primary School. In all the circumstances, it would seem highly likely that the Secretary of State would give his consent were that request to be made of him.

CONSULTATION

This Report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive and the Director of Law and Administration.

JIM ANDERSON

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

JAA/CJ