

## ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

4 June 1996

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Report No 397/96

### PADANARAM PRIMARY SCHOOL - PROPOSED CLOSURE

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#### ABSTRACT

This Report presents the results of the recent consultation exercise, and recommends the closure of Padanaram Primary School.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- a) agrees to the closure of Padanaram Primary School with effect from 26 June 1996;
- b) agrees to extend the delineated area of Kirkriggs Primary School to include that part of the delineated area of Padanaram Primary School which overlaps with the delineated area of Forfar Academy;
- c) agrees to extend the delineated area of Southmuir Primary School to include that part of the delineated area of Padanaram Primary School which overlaps with the delineated area of Webster's High School;
- d) agrees to declare the Padanaram Primary School building surplus to educational requirements.

#### BACKGROUND

Reference is made to the meeting of the Education Committee on 23 April 1996 (Article 4 refers) when the Committee agreed to undertake a formal consultation exercise on the proposals detailed in the recommendations above.

#### CONSULTATION EXERCISE

A press advertisement was placed in the Dundee Courier & Advertiser on 26 April 1996, seeking representations from any parents affected by the proposal to close Padanaram Primary School.

I wrote to the School Boards of Southmuir Primary School and Kirkriggs Primary School seeking their views on 24 April 1996 (there is no School Board presently established for Padanaram Primary School).

Also on 24 April 1996, I wrote to the parents of all children currently attending Padanaram Primary School, and to the parents of the two pre-school pupils residing in the delineated area of Padanaram Primary School known to the education authority, both of whom had already made placing requests for their children to attend another school.

All responses had to be sent to me by 24 May 1996, in accordance with the timescale laid down by statutory Regulations.

To date, three responses have been received. These have come from parents of children currently attending Padanaram Primary School, and they praise the excellent work currently taking place in the school, as well as expressing sadness at the reduction in the school roll and the proposed closure of the school. They also include a strong argument for the benefits which can accrue to pupils by being taught in smaller classes, and in small rural schools generally.

Copies of all responses received are available to any member of the Committee who wishes to inspect them.

## COMMENTS

The sadness expressed by parents is understandable. None of the responses, however, makes a convincing case for the retention of a school with as small a roll as four or five pupils. With so few pupils it is virtually impossible for a school to offer the breadth of experience which schools normally provide, and the educational arguments for closure are very strong.

As members will recall from the information provided in Report No. 193/96, the location of the school is not a particularly remote one, although the school building itself is over  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the village of Padanaram. Children from P5 onwards already attend Kirkriggs Primary School. It is anticipated, therefore, that all the existing P1 - P4 children from Padanaram will be accommodated by current school transport contracts, although it is possible a larger vehicle may be required.

Very few applications for lets of the school have been received in recent years, and it would appear, therefore, as if the school building is not a major community resource. This may well be because of its location outside Padanaram itself, as described above.

It is anticipated that all teaching staff currently deployed in the school will be effectively redeployed, or granted premature retirement, in accordance with their own wishes.

Tayside Contracts are currently responsible for the cleaning of the school, and for delivering the terms of the school catering contract there. This requirement will cease at the end of the current school session if the school is closed, and it will

therefore be necessary to ensure the Managing Director of Tayside Contracts is informed timeously of any decision about the future of the school.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

It is strongly recommended that for educational reasons Padanaram Primary School be closed with effect from the end of the current school session.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Given the need to redeploy or offer premature retirement to existing staff, it is anticipated the financial implications of the closure of Padanaram Primary School in 1996/97 will be broadly neutral. In the longer term, there are potential savings in both property costs and staff costs.

## **CONSULTATION**

This report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance and the Director of Personnel.

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/RB

