

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

4 June 1996

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Report No 398/96

CLOVA PRIMARY SCHOOL - PROPOSED CLOSURE

ABSTRACT

This Report presents the results of the recent consultation exercise, and recommends that the approval of the Secretary of State be sought to close Clova Primary School.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- a agrees to the closure of Clova Primary School with effect from 26 June 1996,
- b agrees to the enlargement of the delineated area of Cortachy Primary School to include that of Clova Primary School,
- c agrees to declare the Clova Primary School building surplus to educational requirements,

all subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for Scotland.

BACKGROUND

Reference is made to the meeting of the Education Committee on 23 April 1996 (Article 3 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 and Advertiser on 26 April 1996 seeking representation from any parents affected by the proposal to close Clova Primary School. Representations had to be with me by 24 May 1996, in accordance with the timescale laid down by statutory Regulations.

Members will recall that in considering Report No 192/96 on 23 April 1996, it was clear that only one pupil would be in attendance at Clova Primary School in session 1996/97. I wrote to the parents of that pupil on 24 April 1996, and I have received a response expressing strong support for the work of the school, comparing it favourably with larger schools containing larger classes, and urging that consideration be given to keeping the school open. I have also received a letter from a member of the local community expressing support for the school and sadness at the prospect of its possible closure.

Copies of these two responses are available to any member who wishes to inspect them. I wrote to the School Board of Cortachy Primary School also, but to date I have received no response from them. There is no School Board currently established for Clova Primary School.

No other comments have been received.

COMMENTS

Whilst understanding the natural disappointment and sadness about the possibility of Clova Primary School being closed, it is difficult to make a case for retaining it. With only one pupil on the roll, I do not believe it is possible for a school to offer the range of educational experiences which all children need. There are very strong educational reasons, therefore, to close Clova Primary School.

It may be necessary to review school transport, but transport contracts from Clova to Kirriemuir are currently in operation for secondary school pupils, and no major difficulty therefore is envisaged in transporting pupils in future to Cortachy Primary School.

Census figures show a dramatic drop in total population in the Glen Clova area between 1971 and 1981, but between 1981 and 1991 the population appears to have remained static. Notwithstanding any population shifts, the most important statistic still remains that of one pupil on the school roll. Members are also reminded that no pre-school pupils known to the education authority are living in the area.

Only one application for a let of Clova Primary School is currently lodged - for a one-off event in November. It would appear, therefore, as if the school building is not a major community resource.

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 this requirement will cease at the end of the current school session, if the school is closed. It will therefore be necessary to ensure that the Managing Director of Tayside Contracts is notified timeously of any decision about the school's future.

CONCLUSIONS

It is strongly recommended that, for educational reasons, Clova Primary School be closed with effect from the end of the current school session, and that the delineated area of Cortachy Primary School be extended to include the delineated area of Clova Primary School.

Since the distance from Clova Primary School to Cortachy Primary School is greater than 5 miles, the Regulations require the Council to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Scotland before the closure can be formally effected.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Given the need to redeploy or offer premature retirement to existing staff, it is anticipated the financial implications of the closure of Clova Primary School in 1996/97 will be broadly neutral. In the longer term, there are potential savings in property costs and staff costs which may be partially offset by additional school transport 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

