

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

31 January 1996

Report by the Director of Education

Report No AC/47/96

SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION FOR PUPILS OUTWITH COUNCIL BOUNDARIES**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this Report is to make the Education Committee aware of the views expressed by parents and by School Boards on specific options put to them, and to seek approval to enter into a formal consultation in April 1996 on a proposal to extend further parental choice of secondary school in Auchterhouse, Birkhill, Liff, Newtyle and Strathmartine.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- a notes the responses to the consultation exercise;
- b confirms that places will continue to be available in Monifieth High School for secondary school pupils normally resident within the current delineated area of that school without the parents of these pupils having to make a formal placing request (Note: this will include pupils normally resident within that part of the area to be administered by Dundee City Council, which comprises the current delineated area of Barnhill Primary School, Dundee);
- c authorises me to consult formally, in terms of the Education (Publication and Consultation, Etc) (Scotland) Regulations, 1981 on a proposal that, for pupils resident in the current delineated areas of Auchterhouse, Birkhill, Liff, Newtyle, Strathmartine and Tealing Schools, parents will continue to be able to send their children to the same secondary school as at present but that in addition:
 - i parents of pupils completing P7, and residing within the delineated areas of Auchterhouse, Birkhill, Liff and Strathmartine Primary Schools, and of Newtyle Secondary School (Primary Department), should be able to choose, without making a placing request, to send their children to Forfar Academy; and
 - ii parents of pupils completing S2 and residing within the delineated area of Newtyle Secondary School (Secondary Department) should

be able to choose, without making a placing request, to send their children to Forfar Academy.

- d instructs me to notify Dundee City Council of this proposal
- e instructs me to report back on the outcome of the consultation as soon as possible

(Note - This formal consultation exercise should not be entered into until Angus Council assumes its responsibilities as an education authority on 1 April 1996, and accordingly it is proposed that the consultation period will be in April/May 1996).

COMMITTEE REFERENCE

Reference is made to the meeting of the Education Committee on 23 August 1995 (Article 4 refers). At that meeting, the Committee considered Report No AC/48/95 which detailed a number of current arrangements relating to the enrolment of pupils in secondary schools where the school normally attended and the normal home addresses of pupils are located within the boundaries of different Councils. The Report outlined various options for such pupils and I was instructed to consult with a range of interested bodies and individuals on these options.

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

Open meetings for parents were arranged by the School Boards of Birkhill Primary School, Liff Primary School, Newtyle Secondary School and Strathmartine Primary School, and I attended each of these meetings personally. In addition, these School Boards, together with the School Boards of Auchterhouse Primary School, Tealing Primary School, Forfar Academy, Monifieth High School and Webster's High School, were each asked to consider the options listed in Report No AC/48/95.

The overwhelming majority of parents of pupils in the six primary schools concerned wished to be able to continue to send their children to the secondary schools currently linked to these primary schools, namely Linlathen High School or Forfar Academy for Tealing Primary School, Kirkton High School for Strathmartine Primary School, and Newtyle Secondary School or Harris Academy or Menzieshill High School for the remaining four. Very few parents were willing to indicate which of Forfar Academy, Monifieth High School or Webster's High School they believed would be the most appropriate alternative option, presumably fearing that by indicating any preference they may be tacitly agreeing to a forced change to the current arrangements. Where it was possible to identify a preference, Forfar Academy seemed to be the school which would provide the most suitable venue.

During all four parents' meetings the status of Newtyle Secondary School was discussed, with some parents seeking clarification on the feasibility of Newtyle becoming a 6 year secondary school.

The School Board of Monifieth High School specifically highlighted their view that pupils living within the current delineated area of Barnhill Primary School should continue to be able to attend Monifieth High School without their parents having to make a placing request, as is presently the case. This Board were happy with the possibility of additional pupils being enrolled.

In discussion with the School Board of Webster's High School it has become clear that legitimate concerns currently exist about the capability of the school premises to cope with existing numbers.

The School Board of Forfar Academy noted some potential practical difficulties if a large number of additional pupils were to be enrolled, but raised no fundamental objections to this possibility.

Dundee City Council have not as yet responded formally, but informal discussions suggest that no imminent changes to current arrangements affecting Angus pupils are likely.

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of responses to the consultation undertaken, and in the light also of the Council's statutory powers and duties, there is every reason to make as little alteration as possible to the current arrangements. Wherever possible, therefore, it is proposed to maintain the current range of parental choice. There would be merit, however, in extending that range further by ensuring that all parents of secondary school pupils normally resident in Angus will in future be able to send their children to an Angus Secondary School if they so wish. The following paragraphs describe possible choices for such a school.

Newtyle Secondary School

The case for upgrading Newtyle's secondary department to a six year comprehensive is a very hard one to make convincingly. Currently there are 68 pupils in the primary department (P1 to P7), 23 pupils in S1, and 26 pupils in S2. Even if all pupils currently in P2 to P7 in Newtyle, Auchterhouse, Birkhill and Liff (ie the complete range of primary schools serving Newtyle's delineated area) were to enrol in the secondary department of Newtyle over the next six years, the total secondary roll would still be less than 300 pupils. Given the parental views expressed above, and the parental choices currently being exercised, this seems a most unlikely scenario, and it would be impossible to justify the fairly major capital expenditure which would be required to accomplish such an upgrading. It is therefore proposed that Newtyle continue to operate a secondary department, offering education in S1 and S2 only for pupils normally resident within its current delineated area (ie including the delineated areas of Auchterhouse, Birkhill and Liff Primary Schools as well as the delineated area of the primary department of Newtyle School).

Monifieth High School

Monifieth High School could accommodate additional pupils from the six primary schools discussed above. For pupils from some of these schools the journey to Monifieth would be a lengthy one, and there is very little evidence of any

widespread parental desire to take advantage of such an option, although two parents from Strathmartine Primary School indicated some interest in this possibility.

(Note - In terms of a different issue, there are clearly legitimate concerns that pupils from Barnhill Primary School should continue to be able to attend Monifieth High School. It is proposed that the Education Committee re-affirms parental entitlement in order further to alleviate any remaining anxiety on this point.)

Webster's High School

The constraints on accommodation in Webster's High School militate against any suggestion that additional pupils be entitled to enrol there.

Forfar Academy

Of all the secondary schools considered, Forfar Academy would appear to be the most appropriate. Although there is little likelihood of a major uptake of places, the school could accommodate this if required. In addition, for all six primary schools involved, the route to Forfar is relatively straightforward and it is anticipated that transport could be arranged without undue difficulty.

It is proposed, therefore, that parents of pupils in P7 residing within the delineated areas of Auchterhouse, Birkhill, Liff, Newtyle and Strathmartine Primary Schools continue to enjoy their current choice of secondary school, but that, in addition, they be able to choose, without making a placing request, to send their children to Forfar Academy.

In terms of the Education (Publication and Consultation Etc) (Scotland) Regulations 1981, as amended, this proposal, if approved by the Committee, would have to form the basis of a formal consultation exercise once the Council assumes the responsibilities of an education authority in April this year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There would be a cost incurred in transporting additional pupils to Forfar Academy, as such pupils would be entitled to this provision, living as they would more than 3 miles from the school designated by the education authority. It is impossible to quantify precisely the cost of this transport without any detailed knowledge of the pupils involved. However, indications from parental opinion canvassed to date suggest that only a very small number of parents are likely to take advantage of this option. In these circumstances, any additional costs could be met within the Education Department's Revenue Budget allocation for school transport.

CONSULTATION

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

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.

