

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

27 January 1998

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Report No 97/98

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND INTO THE MILLENNIUM

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) It is recommended that the Committee authorises me to send the attached responses to CoSLA.
- b) It is also recommended that this report be referred to the Policy & Resources Committee for its interest.

BACKGROUND

CoSLA and the teachers' unions have launched a joint enquiry into public education in Scotland into the Millennium. The intention is to examine issues through written evidence from a wide range of partner organisations and individuals, backed up by oral evidence from key interests.

The Enquiry has established four Task Groups, three of whom have now written to all Scottish Councils inviting them to submit written evidence. The three requests arrived in mid/late December 1997 with responses sought before the end of January 1998, and so the time to prepare a series of considered responses has been exceptionally short.

The three responses (attached - Appendices 1, 2 and 3) have been prepared within the constraints of time as described above.

CONSULTATION

This report and its appendices have been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, and the Directors of Law & Administration, Finance and 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.

APPENDICES 4

JAA/RB

**ANGUS COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND INTO THE MILLENNIUM - TASK GROUP 1**

1 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

- 1.1 This response has been compiled within an exceptionally tight time-scale and one which - given other demands on staff - has precluded any opportunity for measured deliberation between officers of the Council or within consultative staff groups; it should be seen therefore very much as one of several preliminary contributions to what, it is hoped, will be an important national debate.
- 1.2 Critical factors which impinge on the questions being addressed by Task Group 1 include:
- Local Government Reorganisation in 1996
 - the marked lack of consensus in recent years between local and national government, particularly as this has related to key educational issues (eg National Testing, league tables, opting out)
 - continuing press and government comment (often originating from England) citing alleged examples of poor teaching
 - the statutory requirement for Councils to implement schemes of decentralisation
 - the statutory requirement for Councils to secure Value for Money in all their activities
 - the evolving Best Value approaches being adopted by Councils
 - unprecedented financial constraints
 - the plethora of new educational initiatives being promoted by central government
 - the ministerial Task Group which has been established to set improvement targets for schools

2 THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION

- 2.1 Several of the factors listed in 1.2 above combine to limit very severely the power of any local authority to set its own strategic direction.
- 2.2 Notwithstanding these constraints, it is seen as essential that a strategic direction is set, and at present the education authorities are the only bodies able to undertake this role.
- 2.3 In general terms, therefore, one of the major questions to be addressed is the degree of autonomy which a Scottish Parliament ought to devolve to 32 education authorities.
- 2.4 In simplistic terms, the new parliament ought to be expected to develop a framework which is acceptable to local authorities both in the degrees of freedom it gives to them to take account of their own local circumstances, and in terms of their ability to achieve realistic goals within the constraints of available resources. A similar process should be taking place for individual schools within each education authority; indeed this latter part of the process already exists and is well developed in most areas through the process of annually updated development planning. The only missing piece of the jigsaw at present is a national educational development plan, and the new parliament provides an ideal vehicle to establish the development planning process at a national level.
- 2.5 One obvious further question which may legitimately be asked is whether there is any need at all for education authorities in the process described above in 2.4, and whether

it would not be sufficient for schools to exist only within the framework of a single education authority for all of Scotland.

- 2.6 The responses to this question lie partly in Section 3 below and partly in the context of effective governance and the well established need for local circumstances to be understood and taken into account in any strategic plan.
- 2.7 The role of an education authority as an "enabler" as opposed to a "provider" was the subject of lengthy debate in the period leading up to Local Government Reorganisation in 1996. In strategic terms there are very obvious issues which do require to be addressed and for which different Councils have already developed different approaches. It is equally obvious that a degree of pragmatism is required, and perhaps this particular ideological debate has already been resolved in effect by the introduction of a Best Value approach which ought to result in each Council developing different approaches to different services depending on local circumstances, and informed by Best Value principles: some services will therefore, it is assumed, continue to be **provided** by the local authority whereas for others the authority may see it more appropriate to take on the role of facilitator or **enabler**.

3 THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY IN DELIVERING AN EDUCATION SERVICE

- 3.1 The enclosed summary list of functions was prepared by officers of Tayside Regional Council as a helpful aide memoire for new unitary Councils. (Appendix 4)
- 3.2 The summary list is also useful in demonstrating the wide range of tasks and duties which require to be undertaken to enable schools to function efficiently and effectively.
- 3.3 Without central support for this range of functions - some of which are straightforward, some complex - schools could not function; if these functions were devolved to school level, the loss of economies of scale would mean an enormous increase in the cost of delivering these services, whereas if any attempt were made to subsume these functions by a national body, the remoteness from citizens and customers and the inevitable loss of responsiveness to local needs associated with that would make for neither an effective nor an acceptable arrangement.
- 3.4 At the heart of the local authority's role must lie the learning and teaching process: to support and enhance this process the local authority must have in place systems which will ensure there is a sympathetic understanding of the schooling process and of the legitimate aspirations of parents, children and young people, but systems also which promote effective quality improvement. Teaching staff must continue to be committed to providing the best possible education for all children and young people and the local authority has a responsibility to create and maintain the climate which secures that continuing commitment.

4 THE IMPACT OF A SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION SERVICES

- 4.1 There is an expectation that a Scottish parliament will lead to a more effective partnership between central and local government and in particular that the marked lack of consensus which has characterised recent years will become a thing of the past.
- 4.2 Quite how the partnership between the parliament and the 32 local authorities will develop cannot be predicted as yet. However it seems reasonable to propose that all parties should enter into that partnership with reasonably open minds about future working arrangements.
- 4.3 Part of the emerging national plan should also include reference to the future role of existing national bodies (eg SQA, SCCC, SCEC, SCET), colleges and universities, and the various interfaces between officers of these bodies, local authority officers and civil servants (including HMI).

- 4.4 A permeating theme of all these partnerships ought to be quality assurance/quality improvement.

5 THE FUTURE FINANCING OF LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION

- 5.1 The situation which local authorities have faced since 1995 cannot be allowed to continue: it is absolutely essential that education authorities and schools can plan ahead with some certainty for more than one year in advance.
- 5.2 A 3-year budgetary process should be introduced with sufficiently specific allocations provided to allow precise budgetary preparation at individual service level within each Council for a full 3 year period.
- 5.3 If future funding levels for local Councils seem set to fall further an urgent review of how to prioritise spending on critical aspects of Council services - particularly education - should be undertaken jointly by central and local government.



JAA/RB
January 1998

**ANGUS COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND INTO THE MILLENNIUM - TASK GROUP 2
(Management Structure in Schools)**

1 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

- 1.1 This response has been compiled within an exceptionally tight time-scale and one which - given other demands on staff - has precluded any opportunity for measured deliberation between officers of the Council or within consultative staff groups; it should be seen therefore very much as one of several preliminary contributions to what, it is hoped, will be an important national debate.
- 1.2 In general terms the case for critically reviewing existing school management structures is supported, although any proposals for future amendments should be seen in the overall context of the Scottish education service, and not in a vacuum.
- 1.3 Support for an initial review of existing structures should be seen in the context of a system which is working reasonably effectively: unduly precipitate change of an ambitious nature is not to be recommended, but rather an examination of possible options which includes reference to structures currently operating in other organisations (here and abroad) and in the school systems of other countries.
- 1.4 The end-point of any review which does recommend change ought to be a promoted post structure which reflects the needs of pupils and the way in which the curriculum is to be delivered to meet these needs; ideally, however, it ought also to be relatively simple, and designed to maximise the contributions and commitment of all staff.
- 1.5 It is strongly argued that the promoted post structures (and other relevant systems) should exist principally - or possibly solely - to allow efficient and effective planning of the curriculum at whole school level, and equally effective monitoring and quality improvement mechanisms for the delivery of that curriculum. These critically important professional duties can only be undertaken by qualified and experienced teachers. It is wholly mistaken to label these duties as "managerial" in any pejorative sense as commentators appear to do all too easily at present. These duties are the responsibility of all teachers, but there is an irresistible logic in creating some promoted posts which are intended to ensure that matters are indeed addressed at whole school level so that curricular continuity, coherence and progression are secured.

2 PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- 2.1 The enormous range of size of primary schools in Scotland makes generalisation difficult.
- 2.2 The post of head teacher is seen to be essential, and each school ought to have a head teacher.
- 2.3 For schools of up to, say, 170 pupils there should be no absolute requirement for any promoted post other than that of head teacher; larger primary schools are more complex organisations and the bigger the school the greater the challenge of effectively co-ordinating pupils' experiences.
- 2.4 As an initial proposal for further consideration, it is suggested that there should be only one level of promoted post between Teacher and Head Teacher with approximately one sixth of the teaching staff in any one primary school appointed to this level of post.

- 2.5 All teaching staff including promoted staff should expect to undertake some teaching duties. It is accepted that current resourcing levels in primary schools can make it extremely difficult for, say a primary head teacher to satisfactorily combine teaching and managerial duties but the principle espoused in this paragraph is an important one. It is also important to acknowledge that staff charged with the critically important responsibilities of planning and monitoring teaching and learning at a whole-school level cannot also undertake the duties of a **full-time** class teacher: some practical resolution to the combined roles needs to be attainable within the resources made available to the school.
- 2.6 For a range of reasons, including professional development of individuals, preparation and training of staff for headships, desirability of allowing education authorities to target schools in need, etc, some consideration ought to be given to ways in which promoted (and indeed unpromoted) staff in primary schools can more easily transfer from one school to another than is currently the case. This is a sensitive area and care would be required in addressing it so that adequate safeguards were built in for individual teachers, but the potential benefits for pupils (and staff) are enormous.

3 SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- 3.1 The structure of promoted posts in secondary schools has been allowed to evolve in a somewhat piecemeal way with perfectly sound and justifiable reasons for the addition of successive posts. However the end result means we have organisations which appear to an objective view to be unnecessarily hierarchical and complex.
- 3.2 The post of head teacher is seen to be essential, and each school ought to have a head teacher.
- 3.3 Given that the curriculum in secondary schools is delivered by teaching staff, any one of whom is only eligible to teach a limited number of subjects, and given the need to ensure that the curriculum in any one subject area needs to be carefully planned at school level, and its delivery equally carefully monitored, the post of Principal Teacher (Subject) seems to be an absolutely essential one.
- 3.4 There may well be too many Principal Teachers (Subject) in each of our secondary schools for the school to function with maximum effectiveness. It may also be true that there are too many subjects in the secondary school curriculum. In the context of this debate, however, it is vital to recognise that these two issues are inseparable and that any attempt to reduce the number of Principal Teachers (subject) can only follow on from a reduction in the number of subjects offered, a rationalisation of "cognate" departments, or a major change in the pre-service training of teachers to enable any one teacher to teach a wider range of subjects than is currently the norm.

There is also a requirement to ensure that the **whole** school curriculum is coherent; given the complexity of a secondary school catering for the needs of several hundred pupils it is accepted that the head teacher needs some assistance with this essential duty. There is therefore a need either:

- to maintain a level of promoted post between Principal Teacher and Head Teacher, **or**
- to create a system whereby some Principal Teachers (Subject) are given responsibility for more than the planning and monitoring of the curriculum in one subject.

On balance the former of these approaches seems more likely to be successful, given the current constraints within which schools are functioning.

- 3.5 The Guidance system established in Scottish schools has much to commend it; the need to secure effective pastoral care of pupils is at the very heart of any school's

mission, and current Guidance arrangements also provide a framework which can deliver this. They should not therefore be discarded lightly. However, the down-side of current arrangements can mean that the organisational structure of the school militates against all teachers playing their full part in pastoral care in its widest sense. Further examination of this area is therefore recommended.

- 3.6 All teaching staff, including promoted staff, should expect to undertake some teaching duties notwithstanding any practical difficulties which may be associated with such an approach.
- 3.7 Given the size of most secondary schools, there may be fewer reasons than there are in primary schools for ensuring that staff can transfer from school to school more easily than is presently the case. Nonetheless, it is recommended that this issue should form part of the review for secondary schools also.

4 GENERAL COMMENTS

- 4.1 The notion that it is possible to devise a meaningful twin track structure ought to be critically challenged.
- 4.2 One very powerful argument against any unduly hierarchical structure is that it surely has the potential to de-motivate those who remain at the "bottom" of the hierarchy; rather than devising more hierarchies therefore we should be looking for ways of making the existing structure as light as possible so that the perception of teachers, pupils, parents and the public is of the job of a classroom teacher as a vitally important one, and one which is rewarding in itself.
- 4.3 The notion about promoted posts being about "administrative duties" also needs to be challenged: whilst an element of administration is essential to maintain the smooth running of any large organisation, the profession as a whole needs to continue to assert the critical roles of planning and monitoring of the whole school curricular experience as being at the heart of the head teacher's job and also at the heart of the jobs of all promoted post holders who are assisting the head teacher. If there are genuine issues about promoted staff having to spend disproportionate amounts of time on genuine "administrative" tasks, then the solutions to this should include a critical look at the nature of their tasks and also at the levels of administrative support staff available within schools.



JAA/RB
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**ANGUS COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND INTO THE MILLENNIUM - TASK GROUP 4
(Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff in School Education)
(SJNC TSSE)**

1 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

- 1.1 This response has been compiled within an exceptionally tight time-scale and one which - given other demands on staff - has precluded any opportunity for measured deliberation between officers of the Council or within consultative staff groups; it should be seen therefore very much as one of several preliminary contributions to what, it is hoped, will be an important national debate.
- 1.2 The case for reviewing the work of the SJNC is fully supported.
- 1.3 The issues highlighted in this Task Group's request for comment seem to be relevant and comprehensive.

2 STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS/NATIONAL AND LOCAL BARGAINING

- 2.1 Whilst there may be superficial attractions to move towards greater local bargaining on salary matters, on balance the advantages of national arrangements currently pertaining are believed to outweigh the disadvantages.
- 2.2 In these circumstances if any amendments to the current constitution of the SJNC are required, these should be essentially minor in nature
- 2.3 The conditions of service which Scottish teachers currently enjoy are a legitimate subject for further consideration: the role of the SJNC in this process is a key one, although there would be considerable merit in a national framework being negotiated within the SJNC which allowed for significantly more scope for meaningful local bargaining to take place than is currently the case.

3 COMPOSITION OF THE SJNC/CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

- 3.1 This is inextricably linked with issues related to the emerging role of a future Scottish parliament.
- 3.2 As far as salary negotiations are concerned there is a lack of logic in the current arrangements.
- 3.3 Whilst it is accepted that - since local government reorganisation - the management side of the SJNC has made strenuous efforts to ensure all Councils are fully consulted, it is equally true that not all Councils can participate directly on the SJNC for very sound practical reasons: inherent within such an arrangement is the root of future tensions and difficulties.
- 3.4 Current arrangements for the funding of local Councils mean that central government control in very large part the amount of money available to fund any salary award, but the Secretary of State only has 2 representatives out of the 36 strong SJNC: these aspects of the arrangements also must be seen as inherently unstable.
- 3.5 It is difficult to see how these potential difficulties should be resolved, but the Task Group is encouraged to give them a high priority.

4 STATUTORY BASIS/FUTURE REMIT

- 4.1 In other matters, teachers unions, CoSLA and local authorities have argued against the need for legislation on key aspects of educational provision. Whilst it is accepted that the SJNC currently is a creature of statute, as a general principle it seems reasonable to argue that a legislative framework can be unduly restrictive and should therefore be avoided if possible.
- 4.2 Without a legislative framework presumably it would be more easy for the SJNC to evolve in future in ways best suited to the needs of young people and of the country as a whole.



JAA/RB
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CORE RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN EDUCATION AUTHORITY

DISCUSSION PAPER

The local education authority must:

- (i) ensure that effective policies on learning and teaching are in place
- (ii) ensure that sufficient school places are available
- (iii) review and as necessary reorganise the pattern of local schools
- (iv) manage the revenue and capital budget, both in terms of project formulation and management, and of financial control
- (v) ensure the maintenance and where possible upgrade the fabric of schools
- (vi) acquire and maintain sites which may be needed to secure (ii)
- (vii) establish admission arrangements
- (viii) make arrangements for parents to express their choice of school
- (ix) regulate admissions to schools, bearing in mind the limits of available accommodation
- (x) arrange for parents' choice of school to be considered, including an appeals system
- (xi) maintain a DSM funding scheme and consult schools about variations
- (xii) set an annual budget for the education service and allocate the aggregated schools budget to individual schools in accordance with (xi)
- (xiii) respond to questions by individual schools about funding and make adjustments to budget from centrally held funds within the terms of the DSM scheme
- (xiv) determine the pattern of special education provision in the area
- (xv) determine the special educational needs of individual pupils
- (xvi) respond to parents' appeals relating to records of need
- (xvii) assess and pay bursaries and determine appeals
- (xviii) assess and notify schools of pupils' eligibility for free meals
- (xix) provide a school transport service, assess the eligibility of pupils for free school transport and determine appeals
- (xx) provide training to school boards
- (xxi) ensure that pupils attend school, and take appropriate action if they do not
- (xxii) respond to complaints and enquiries about the education service from parents, members of the public, MPs, local councillors etc
- (xxiii) maintain a statement of policy in relation to the curriculum in schools
- (xxiv) retain an active role in the recruitment, training, review and employment of staff, both teaching and non-teaching
- (xxv) provide advice and training to schools and teachers about the complex and changing requirements of the curriculum and its assessment
- (xxvi) maintain an overview of curricular arrangements within each of its schools
- (xxvii) determine and deploy resources for children of below statutory school age
- (xxviii) determine and deploy resources for community education provision and the education support services to include such statutory provision as educational psychologists
- (xxix) determine and deploy resources through grants
- (xxx) respond to requirements (statistical returns, consultation, enquiries etc) by the Scottish Office and agencies such as the Accounts Commission, EOC etc

