

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

20 NOVEMBER 2001

MONIFIETH HIGH SCHOOL

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

**ABSTRACT**

This report describes the continuing concerns about possible future overcrowding in Monifieth High School, particularly in the longer term. The report recommends that the Council should undertake a formal consultation exercise to enable the delineated area of Monifieth High School to be reduced in the fullness of time.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- a notes that, notwithstanding efforts to restrict the pupil intake, the roll of Monifieth High School is continuing to rise, and the school is already having to operate at just above its notional capacity
- b notes also that the delineated area of Monifieth High School continues to include an area outwith the boundaries of Angus Council
- c instructs me to undertake a formal consultation exercise in terms of the Education (Publication and Consultation, etc) Regulations Scotland 1981 (as amended) on a proposal that that part of the delineated area of Monifieth High School which lies outwith the boundaries of Angus Council should be deleted from the delineated area of Monifieth High School with effect from 1 January 2009.
- d instructs me to report back on the outcomes of the aforementioned consultation exercise
- e instructs me also in the meantime to liaise closely with the School Board and Head Teacher of Monifieth High School in order to ensure that parents of prospective pupils of Monifieth High School are aware of the potential for the school to become overcrowded and therefore of the high possibility that parental placing requests in future will be refused

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Reference is made to the meeting of Angus Council on 16 December 1999 (Agenda Item 7) when the Council agreed to amend the delineated area of Monifieth High School. Members of the Committee may recall that part of the delineated area of Monifieth High School (within Barnhill, in Dundee) was then deleted from the Monifieth delineated area by the Council in 2000 after approval had been sought and received from the Scottish Executive. However, a significant proportion of the delineated area of Barnhill Primary School (within Dundee) was unaffected by this decision, and that area remains within the delineated area of Monifieth High School.

- 2.2 Monifieth High School was built in the 1970s. It is a well maintained and attractive building, well suited to meet modern educational requirements. Tayside Regional Council set the school capacity of Monifieth High School at 990 pupils, and the intake limit for a single year group at 198 pupils.
- 2.3 A review of all school capacities was undertaken by Angus Council in late 1996/early 1997 and – after full consultation with head teachers and School Boards – new capacities and intake limits were set for all schools (Education Committee 21 January 1997 – Agenda Item 7). In the case of Monifieth High School the school capacity was set at 1060 pupils, and the intake limit for a single year group at 200 pupils.
- 2.4 The current roll configuration (School Census September 2001) is:

<b>S1</b>	<b>S2</b>	<b>S3</b>	<b>S4</b>	<b>S5</b>	<b>S6</b>	<b>Total</b>
216*	209*	197	215*	154	82	1073

\* (Note – the intake limit of 200 pupils has now been exceeded in 3 of the last 4 years, principally as a result of the Council's efforts to keep faith with as many parents as possible who had a legitimate expectation that their children should attend Monifieth High School)

- 2.5 It is also relevant to note the rising trend in the total pupil roll in Monifieth High School over the last 7 years:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Pupil Roll (September Census) – Monifieth High School</b>
1994	852
1995	861
1996	874
1997	910
1998	984
1999	1004
2000	1039
2001	1073

- 2.6 There are a number of factors which have contributed to the rising roll, including a number of new housing developments in the area, as well as the extension of the school's delineated area in 1998 to include Auchterhouse/Birkhill/Liff/Newtyle after Angus Council had decided to close the S1/S2 secondary department in Newtyle, and Dundee City Council had decided to withdraw the right of parents living in these areas to send their children to Harris Academy without making a parental placing request.
- 2.7 The rapid and continuing spread of new housing developments within the Monifieth area has contributed in no small measure to the rising roll, and there are concerns about future trends. Current predictions for the next five years suggest continuing pupil intakes

of at least 200 pupils, with a “bulge” of well over 200 pupils (approximately 240) in the delineated area likely to seek entry into S1 in August 2003.

- 2.8 The school is currently functioning at just above its notional capacity. (There are 1073 pupils enrolled, and the capacity has been set at 1060 pupils). While this is not ideal, serious overcrowding is not yet being experienced; nonetheless a continuing increase in roll will put the school’s ability to cope under increasing strain.

### 3 OPERATION OF PLACING REQUESTS

- 3.1 Members of the Committee are reminded that I have been instructed to accept parental placing requests for schools whenever possible but that, if it does prove impossible to accept all placing requests for any school, to apply the following prioritisation

Priority Category 1 - children living within the school’s delineated area

Priority Category 2 - children outwith the delineated area but having a brother or sister currently in attendance at the school

Priority Category 3 - all other children outwith the delineated area

If there is a need to prioritise further within any one of the above categories, priority is to be given firstly to children resident in Angus; thereafter priority within any one category (or sub category) is to be decided on the grounds of distance from the school, with highest priority conferred on children living closest to the school (Education Committee 24 November 1998 – Agenda Item 11).

- 3.2 The majority of children and young people attending Monifieth High School reside within its current delineated area. Of the current school roll:

- 918 pupils reside within the delineated area\* (Priority 1 placing requests)
- 41 pupils reside outwith the delineated area but have/had older siblings enrolled in the school (Priority 2)\*\* placing requests
- 114 pupils reside outwith the delineated area and have no siblings in attendance at the school (Priority 3)\*\*\*

\* of these “Priority 1” pupils, 758 live within the boundaries of Angus Council

\*\* of these “Priority 2” pupils, 7 live within the boundaries of Angus Council

\*\*\* of these “Priority 3” pupils, 31 live within the boundaries of Angus Council

(In total 796 pupils (74%) of pupils on the current school roll live in Angus, and 277 (26%) live outwith Angus)

- 3.3 Since 1999, a small number of parental placing requests for S1 have been refused. Some parents whose requests have been refused have exercised their right of appeal and an Appeal Committee, especially constituted to consider these appeals, has dealt with each such case on its merits. For example, in June of this year, eight parents of pupils seeking entry to S1 in August 2001 appealed against decisions to refuse their placing requests, with three of these parents being successful and having their appeals upheld.

- 3.4 Members will be aware therefore that refusal of placing requests can be applied but there cannot be an absolute certainty that such refusals will be upheld.

- 3.5 In coming to any decisions about individual Placing Requests, it is necessary to weigh in the balance the situation affecting the individual child concerned with the situation

affecting all other children in the school. The more children who are enrolled in Monifieth High School, the greater the potential for overcrowding to affect individual children within the school. In the event of the current school capacity being significantly exceeded, it is possible that placing requests from Priority 2 or even Priority 1 children may have to be refused, although clearly this is a step which I would recommend only in extreme circumstances, and one which an Appeal Committee would be likely to support also only in extreme circumstances. If these circumstances were to apply, then the Priority 1 children whose requests would have to be refused would be those residing outwith Angus Council and it may be desirable to highlight this possibility at some point to any parents likely to be affected, with as much advance notice as possible.

#### **4 POSSIBLE FURTHER AMENDMENTS TO DELINEATED AREA OF MONIFIETH HIGH SCHOOL**

- 4.1 Members will recall their deliberations in 1999. At that time, the reduction in the delineated area which was given effect was deliberately minimalist in the hope that only small adjustments would be necessary. A major part of the delineated area of Barnhill Primary School (in Dundee) therefore currently remains within the delineated area of Monifieth High School.
- 4.2 When the Council consulted with parents on proposals to reduce the delineated area in 1999, several parents consulted had enrolled their children in Barnhill Primary School in the expectation that these same children would be entitled to transfer to Monifieth High School at the end of P7. Given the very persuasive arguments put forward by these parents, the Council adopted temporary Placing Request prioritisation arrangements in order to attempt to recognise the unusual position in which some families could find themselves were the delineated area of Monifieth High School to be reduced by deleting an area in which they resided. The Appeal Committee which considered cases in June of this year also put significant weight on this particular point and indeed all the Appeals which were upheld in June 2001 came from families in this very specific situation.
- 4.3 Recent experience suggests, therefore, that immediately excising a part of the Monifieth High delineated area (without any compensatory special provisions for children living in that area and currently attending primary school) may be seen as being unduly disadvantageous to these children, and may in practice prove quite difficult to apply.
- 4.4 Nonetheless, a further reduction in the delineated area does offer an obvious means of attempting to reduce pressure on the current school building.
- 4.5 In order to reduce the delineated area of Monifieth High School without unduly disadvantaging any children whose families have enrolled them in primary school in good faith in the expectation of a transfer to Monifieth High School, it seems inevitable that the longer term view must be taken. In these circumstances, it is being proposed that the delineated area of Monifieth High School should be amended by deleting all parts of that delineated area outwith the boundaries of Angus Council, but that this change should not take effect until 2009. The purpose of the 7 year delay is to be able to alert families at the time of their children's enrolment in Barnhill Primary School of the likelihood that subsequent enrolment in Monifieth High School will not be automatically granted.
- 4.6 What is being proposed therefore would have no impact whatsoever on families presently living in the Barnhill part of what is currently the Monifieth High School delineated area and whose children are already enrolled in Barnhill Primary School. It is assumed that such families have enrolled their children in Barnhill Primary School with a legitimate expectation that these children can then progress on to Monifieth High School after Primary 7, if that is their parents' wish. However, any family living in this area and enrolling their first child in Barnhill Primary School from August 2002 onwards would be alerted to the likelihood that entry to Monifieth High School after P7 would only be possible by way of a formal parental placing request, with absolutely no guarantee that such a placing request would necessarily be successful.

- 4.7 In considering this matter, the Education Committee is reminded that pupils residing within the delineated area of Barnhill Primary School and attending Barnhill Primary School are treated by Dundee City Council as Priority 1 Placing Requests for Grove Academy, so that an alternative neighbourhood secondary school is readily available for these children.

## **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 In accordance with the Standing Orders of the Council, this report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and the Director of Law & Administration. The Director of Planning & Transport has also been consulted.
- 5.2 In order to effect a proposal such as this, a statutory consultation will be required, and it is proposed that this should now be undertaken.
- 5.3 In addition, it is proposed that Dundee City Council should also be consulted.
- 5.4 Given the terms of current legislation, if – after statutory consultation – the Council decides to adopt this proposal, then the formal consent of Scottish Ministers will have to be sought.

## **6 HUMAN RIGHTS**

- 6.1 In compiling this Report every effort has been made to acknowledge any potential Human Rights issues which may arise.
- 6.2 In approving the proposed statutory consultation exercise, there are no specific Human Rights issues arising.

Jim Anderson  
Director of Education

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