

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 20 NOVEMBER 2001
PERSONNEL & PROPERTY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 27 NOVEMBER 2001**

ARBROATH HIGH SCHOOL: BUILDING ADAPTATIONS

JOINT REPORT BY THE DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION AND PROPERTY SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This report seeks the approval of elected members to undertake a programme of development work in Arbroath High School. The funding for this planned development will be drawn from monies provided by the Scottish Executive under the New Community Schools project (Phase III) and Excellence Fund (Programme 10 - Inclusion).

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committees for their respective interests:

- i) note the contents of this report which has been produced in the context of the Council's policy for the Inclusion of Pupils with Special Educational Needs;
- ii) approve the plans for the development of additional facilities in Arbroath High School to meet the needs of pupils with specific and significant support requirements;
- iii) approve, in consultation with the Director of Finance, the procurement of the project as outlined in Section 4, at an estimated cost of £140,000.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Council has developed and publicised a strategy for the provision of support for children with special educational needs. Depending on the level and type of support required there are three distinct elements to the present support framework:

- i) children with special educational needs are integrated into mainstream provision and supported in their local school wherever possible;
- ii) for those pupils with particular needs which cannot be met in their local school there is the option of attending another Angus school where specialist staff are available;
- iii) a small percentage of pupils require specialised provision which is at present unavailable within Angus and which leads to the purchase of places outwith Angus. This results in a substantial element of costs for education and transport and, occasionally, residence fees.

2.2 All eight secondary schools in Angus are classed as "resourced" and have a staffing complement which includes a dedicated number of teachers employed to work in the areas of Special Educational Needs (SEN), Behavioural Support and Support for Learning. Within each secondary school there is an enhanced general level of support for pupils and, in four schools, Brechin High School, Montrose Academy, Carnoustie High School and Monifieth High School new specialist facilities. Work is also underway to improve facilities for children unable to access the mainstream curriculum in Arbroath Academy.

- 2.3 Much of the development work undertaken to enhance provision in schools for children with special educational needs has been as a result of the additional funding from central government. Details of improvements carried out to schools along with plans for further developments were last considered by the Education Committee at its meeting on 7 March 2000 (item 8(a) refers).
- 2.4 Plans were already in place to utilise central funding to further enhance provision within Arbroath High School for the session commencing August 2002 but there is currently no surplus space available which can be utilised to provide an enhanced learning environment for a number of children with special support needs. A feasibility study has been drawn up to examine ways in which adaptations can be made to the present building to address the needs of these children and young people who might otherwise have to be educated elsewhere.
- 2.5 The proposed development, if approved, would provide two additional classrooms, a therapy room, a disabled toilet, a staff base and the potential for a further expansion, if required in future.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Additional monies have been made available to the Council in 2001/02 (and 2002/3) through two separate sources of funding – both of which have been provided by the Scottish Executive.
- 3.2 The first of these funds is to develop the New Community Schools project (Phase III) in the Arbroath High School cluster group of schools and the second is the Excellence Fund Programme 10 which has been established to promote Inclusion. There is provision within the budget for this latter programme to improve school accommodation (£70,000). In addition, such a facility would meet many of the objectives of New Community Schools and it would be appropriate therefore to also utilise part of the New Community Schools funding for this project.
- 3.3 It is intended to commence the project in January 2002 and complete by April 2002.

4 METHOD OF PROCUREMENT

- 4.1 To allow the project to commence early in January 2002 for completion during the current financial year, it is proposed, with the approval of Committee, to enter into negotiation with a contractor (or contractors). The negotiation will be based on a combination of Schedule of Rates Contract 2001/04 and a tender recently won in competition for Education property work. The Director of Property Services will consult with the Director of Finance in concluding the negotiations.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The total cost of the project is estimated to be £140,000, with phasing, indicating expenditure of £120,000 in 2001/02 and £20,000 in 2002/03. As outlined above the cost in 2001/02 would be met from the Inclusion budget (£70,000) and new community schools (£50,000). The expenditure in 2002/03 would be met from the Inclusion budget.
- 5.2 The costs of the proposals which have been detailed can be met from actual government funding (100%) as described in Section 3.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The planned extension to Arbroath High School is necessary to provide an appropriate curriculum for a small and vulnerable group of children.
- 6.2 The alternative to this development would be to seek costly educational placements elsewhere outwith Angus and this would be at odds with the Council's policy to promote inclusion through locally-assessable services.
- 6.3 The development represents a significant long-term benefit for the children and young people of Angus.
- 6.4 Procurement by project as outlined above will allow the works to commence in early January 2002 for completion by April 2002.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no human rights implications arising directly from consideration of this report. However, as a consequence of proceeding with this development to support children with special educational needs it is envisaged that the Council's services in this area will be further strengthened.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 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.

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DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Note: 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/JN/RB
November 2001