

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2001

**BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW:
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS – PROGRESS REPORT**

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to advise the Education Committee of progress being made in relation to the Special Educational Needs Best Value Service Improvement Plan.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- a) notes the terms of this report;
- b) notes the significant progress made to date in implementing the Best Value Service Improvement Plan, as detailed in the appendix to this report.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Reference is made to the meeting of the Education Committee on 24 August 1999 when the Committee approved the contents of the Special Educational Needs Service Review document and the accompanying Service Improvement Plan (article 2(c) refers). Although the Best Value report indicated a very clear consensus amongst staff, parents and children about the delivery in Angus of a high quality, efficient and effective support service for children with special educational needs, possible improvements were highlighted in relation to the following areas:

- Strategic multi-agency planning involving parents
- Revision of departmental documentation in respect of the recording process for children with special educational needs
- Development of parent support groups in all resourced schools
- Establishment of a new resourced facility for primary-aged pupils with hearing impairment
- Revision of the primary promoted SEN staff structure
- Establishment of new, additional pre-five (SEN) provision in South-West Angus
- Establishment of provision for primary-aged pupils with social and emotional difficulties
- Review of access arrangements to leisure facilities for pupils with SEN
- Establishment of additional primary provision for children with autistic spectrum disorders
- Establishment of new provision for primary-aged pupils with visual impairments

- New provision to meet the total care needs of children with severe disabilities

3. IMPROVEMENT PLAN: OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 The attached improvement plan (Appendix 1) provides a summary of the very considerable progress which has been made to date in the implementation of the Improvement Plan approved by Committee on 24 August 1999. In particular, it should be noted that proposals 5 (Establishment of a facility for hearing impaired pupils) and 8 (Establishment of a facility for primary-aged pupils with social and emotional difficulties) were completed earlier than planned (using funding from Excellence Fund Programme 10 : Inclusion). The work undertaken by the service review team ensured plans were well advanced to optimise use of Excellence Fund resources when these became available at short notice.

4. STANDARDS IN SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS, ETC ACT 2000: IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PROVISION

- 4.1 Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000 introduces a requirement that the education of all children should be provided in mainstream schools unless certain, specified, exceptions apply. This new requirement serves to underline the importance of the Council's service improvement plan for children with special educational needs.
- 4.2 Given the rise in the need for specialised forms of support for children in schools in recent years, much of which is the direct result of advances in medical care, and the new requirement to "mainstream" children it is likely that there will be significant cost implications in future years for the Council

5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Clearly, all of the work described in this report needs to be taken forward with full regard for Human Rights legislation. All the projects described in the internal Service Improvement Plan should serve to improve the Council's services to individuals and to the community as a whole and – as such – should be helpful in ensuring that the Council is complying fully with all the terms of the Human Rights Act 1988 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6. CONSULTATION

In accordance with the standing orders of the Council, this report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Law & Administration and the Director of Finance.

Jim Anderson
Director of Education

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.

APPENDIX