

ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
22 JANUARY 2002
MONIFIETH HIGH SCHOOL
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report provides feedback on a recent consultation exercise and recommends a reduction in the delineated area of Monifieth High School – that reduction to take effect from 1 January 2009.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- a notes the responses to the recent consultation exercise, as outlined in this report and in the Appendices, and acknowledges the understandable position adopted by the respondents to the consultation exercise;
- b approves, subject to the formal ratification of Scottish Ministers, the proposal on which the consultation took place, namely:

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

- c instructs me to seek approval of Scottish Ministers for this amendment, but in the meantime also to take whatever steps can be taken to raise the awareness of parents of prospective pupils of Monifieth High School about this planned amendment;

2 BACKGROUND

Reference is made to the meeting of the Education Committee on 20 November 2001 when I was instructed to undertake a formal consultation exercise 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.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 In accordance with the terms of existing legislation, the views of the School Board of Monifieth High School were sought directly. An advertisement was placed in the local press inviting written representations from parents of any pupils likely to be affected by the proposal.

- 3.2 In addition, Dundee City Council were afforded a formal opportunity to make comments on the proposal, as was the School Board of Barnhill Primary School. I attended a meeting of the Barnhill School Board on 6 December 2001, and a meeting of Barnhill parents that same evening.
- 3.3 Responses have been received from:
- the School Board of Monifieth High School (Appendix 1)
 - the school Board of Barnhill Primary School (Appendix 2)
 - Barnhill School Parents' Association (Appendix 3)
- 3.4 The Education Committee of Dundee City Council is also giving consideration to the proposal (at its meeting on 21 January 2002), and – if it is possible – a verbal report on its deliberations will be provided for members.

4 COMMENTS

- 4.1 The concerns expressed by the Barnhill School Board and by the Barnhill Parents' Association (Appendices 2 and 3) are understandable. Although it is perfectly true to say that Monifieth High School is in close proximity to Barnhill, nonetheless the responsibility of an education authority is to make adequate educational provision for all children in its area. In these circumstances, the overall population pattern needs to be looked at in conjunction with the location of existing schools; to continue indefinitely to give priority to Barnhill children to attend Monifieth High School would be unsustainable if this were to mean that other children in Angus would have an unacceptably long home-to-school journey, and/or that there may be a requirement to amend a number of secondary school catchment areas should some sort of domino effect take place.
- 4.2 It is important to reiterate the existence of placing request legislation; this legislation provides all parents with an opportunity to request a school of their choice and places a responsibility on education authorities to accede to these requests unless certain very clearly specified conditions apply. This means of course that even if the Barnhill area were to be deleted from the Monifieth High School delineated area, parents of pupils in Barnhill would still be able to make placing requests for their children to attend Monifieth High School and the Council would be duty bound to accept these requests unless certain conditions apply. If it transpires, therefore, that overcrowding is not experienced and that Monifieth High School could accommodate children whose parents wish them to attend as a result of parental placing requests, then these same children would be accommodated in Monifieth High School.
- 4.3 It should also be clear from the effective date of the proposal that every effort is being made to keep faith with those families who have children already enrolled in the primary department of Barnhill Primary School and who wish these children to transfer to secondary education in Monifieth High School. Although it is true to say that serious overcrowding may force the Council to refuse entry to some of these children in the course of the next seven years (in accordance with our own agreed prioritisation arrangements for school enrolments), nonetheless the arguments against such a course of action are quite persuasive. No absolute guarantees can therefore be given to parents but it should be clear from the proposed effective date of the amended arrangements (1 January 2009) that Angus Council is intent on Monifieth High School continuing to serve Barnhill if it possibly can for another seven years.
- 4.4 The concerns of the Monifieth High School Board (Appendix 1) are also understandable. Efforts are continuing to identify ways in which improvements to the current accommodation can be effected in order to make the school environment as conducive as possible to meaningful and stimulating education, and it is clear that a very careful watching brief will have to be kept on the pupil roll and the projected pupil roll.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 In all the circumstances, it is recommended that the original proposal should now be implemented, subject to formal ratification by Scottish Ministers in accordance with current legislation.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS

7.1 Given the safeguards which have been built into these proposals (as described in the above paragraphs), there are no Human Rights implications arising from approval of the recommendations contained within this Report.

8 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 Finance and the Director of Law & Administration.

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.

APPENDICES

JAA/CJ