

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 15 JANUARY 2002
EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 22 JANUARY 2002

NEW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

JOINT REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committees of the provision of additional funding from the Scottish Executive to roll out the New Community School approach across Angus during 2002/03 and 2003/04 and to seek Committee approval for the development of detailed plans with schools and other relevant service providers.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee and the Social Work Committee, each for its respective interest:

- i) notes and approves the terms of this report;
- ii) authorises the Directors of Education and Social Work to submit a co-ordinated response to the letter from the Scottish Executive by the deadline of 31 January 2002 in terms of the body of this report;
- iii) instructs the Directors of Education and Social Work to provide a report to the Committee detailing plans for the development of services in line with Scottish Executive guidelines as soon as possible.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As part of the government's commitment to Raising Standards and tackling social exclusion the Secretary of State launched proposals for the development of New Community Schools across Scotland on 4 November 1998.
- 2.2 At the heart of these proposals was a determination to ensure that Scotland has a world class education system which ensures opportunity for all. To achieve this end the Scottish Executive wishes all Councils to promote developments which will bring together under one roof a single team of professionals from a range of services including education, health and social work. The intention is to have expert advice directly at hand and not at the end of a referral chain to other agencies. Co-ordination is not viewed as being sufficient in itself – the aim is to achieve integration.
- 2.3 The proposals were first outlined to the Education Committee on 26 January 1999 (report no 47/99, item 12 refers). Subsequently, a report detailing the successful outcome of a bid for the development of a project based in Arbroath Academy and the associated burgh feeder primaries was considered by the Education Committee on 8 June 1999 (report no 53/99, item 12 refers).
- 2.4 Following on from the success of the first project, a second bid for funding was submitted to the Scottish Executive to endorse Arbroath High School and the associated burgh feeder primaries as a new project. This second bid was homologated by the Education Committee on 10 October 2000 (report no 1137/00, item 3 refers). Confirmation of the success of the second bid was reported to Committee on 24 April 2001 (report no 476/01, item 8 refers). The effect of these developments has meant that all of the schools in Arbroath are designated as being New Community Schools.

- 2.5 This Committee report has been prepared as the result of a circular letter which was issued to all Chief Executives on 17 December 2001 (copy attached as Appendix 1). The timescale for responses to the letter from the Scottish Executive has been set for 31 January 2002. Inevitably, the timing of this process does not coincide with the Committee's cycle of meetings and, indeed, places considerable pressure upon members of staff in drawing up a multi-agency response in order to ensure the most effective use of the additional monies being made available to the Council.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The development of the New Community Schools project was always envisaged by the multi-agency team which submitted both of the bid documents to be a medium – long term venture. Given that the projected outcomes relate mainly to improved pupil attainment, greater social inclusion, improved health outcomes, reduced rates of criminality and fewer children in local authority care it was recognised that progress towards achieving these goals would require sustained efforts over a significant period of time.
- 3.2 The first project which was established to cover Arbroath Academy and the associated burgh feeder primary schools has been in place for almost three years and is beginning to show real benefits to the individual schools involved. A copy of the New Community Schools (Phase I) interim report, December 2001, is attached as Appendix 2. Similarly, the newer project based on Arbroath High School and the associated burgh feeder primaries, is also showing promising signs with a number of school-specific projects including the establishment of breakfast clubs and additional staff already in place.
- 3.3 One of the principal reasons for the success of these developments has been through the provision of enhanced levels of professional and ancillary staffing available to schools as a result of central government funding. The additional support provided by staff with skills in the areas of family group work, community support, health promotion along with enhanced ancillary support in schools has led to measurable improvements and benefits for staff and parents alike.
- 3.4 It is rather disappointing to note, therefore, that the roll out programme is not to be funded on the same scale as either of the pilot projects. As a consequence, it is highly unlikely that the roll out programme will provide the same levels of support for other communities either in the amount of new resources or in the range of services which will be available.
- 3.5 The implementation of the New Community School programme has, to date, been characterised by late announcements of funding from, or approval of Council plans by, the Scottish Executive. This latest announcement, outlining the roll out funding process with the associated requirement to have a plan agreed by key stakeholders, including the Chief Executive of the Health Board, by the end of January 2002 places unnecessary and unhelpful pressure upon the Council and its partners – although the confirmation of funding is in itself welcome.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Scottish Executive funding for the existing Phase I project based in Arbroath Academy and its associated burgh feeder primary schools (£200,000 per annum) will cease on 30 March 2002 although it has been suggested that funds will continue to be allocated within the grant aided expenditure funding allocated to the Council to maintain existing levels of support. Monies for the Arbroath High School project (up to £200,000 per annum) will continue to be available until 30 March 2004 at which time it is clear that this source of funding will also cease.
- 4.2 In addition to these existing funding streams an additional allocation of £250,800 for 2002/03 and £250,800 for 2003/04 will be provided to the Council to fund the roll out of the project across Angus.
- 4.3 In welcoming the additional monies it is important that the Committee notes the fact that the existing projects, based upon single clusters of schools, have been funded to the extent of £200,000 each per annum. The sum of money envisaged for the roll out programme is considerably less than this level of support and, if the same level of funding were to have been made available to the other six cluster groups in Angus, it would have been reasonable to anticipate an income of £1.2 million per annum to roll out the programme on a similar basis.
- 4.4 In that light, it will be necessary to review the present New Community School staff complement to determine the best possible use of New Community School monies. The availability of Changing Children's Services fund monies and any other funding streams will also be considered in addressing the issues of raising attainment and promoting social inclusion across Angus.

- 4.5 Following the deliberations of the multi-agency team which will produce plans for the roll out of the New Community Schools approach detailed costings will be produced for the Committee's consideration and approval. All costs for the development will be contained within the existing budgets of Education and Social Work supplemented by central government monies allocated specifically for this purpose.

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, the Director of Law & Administration and the Director of Social Work.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 A small planning group with representatives from Education, Social Work and Health will meet to produce detailed proposals for wider consultation.
- 6.2 It will be necessary to ensure the involvement of all key stakeholders in finalising these proposals – most specifically, the Head Teachers and staff in the schools concerned.
- 6.3 It is probable that, in years 2002/03 and 2003/04 the roll out programme will be confined to three cluster groups of schools with the intention of providing additional support to these schools to tackle issues of raising attainment and promoting social inclusion.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no human rights implications arising directly from consideration of this report. However, as a consequence of developing improved multi-agency services for children, young people and the wider community it is envisaged that the Council's services in a number of areas will be further strengthened.

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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.

APPENDICES