

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **EDUCATION COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Wednesday 22 October 2008 at 4.00 pm.

Present: Councillors PETER NIELD, ALISON ANDREWS, MAIRI EVANS, IAIN GAUL, DAVID LUMGAIR, DAVID MAY, DONALD MORRISON, ROB MURRAY, ROBERT MYLES, HELEN OSWALD, JOHN RYMER, MARK SALMOND, PAUL VALENTINE and SHEENA WELSH.

Church Representatives: Mr BILL SIMPSON and Mr DAVID ADAMS.

Teacher Representatives: Mr PHILIP JACKSON and Mr BRIAN McHARDY.

Councillor NIELD, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs Patricia Millar.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Committee agreed to note that no declarations of interest were made.

3. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The [minute of meeting of this Committee of 28 August 2008](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener, subject as hereinafter noted:-

(a) Healthy Eating in Schools

(b) Issue of HMI Reports

The Committee noted that the above issues had been raised by the Convener after the conclusion of the meeting. These matters had not been included on the agenda, nor had they been declared urgent by the Convener.

After hearing the Convener, who emphasised that he had raised these issues informally with a view to obtaining the comments of members, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the position;
- (ii) to note that Councillor Oswald had requested that, in light of the discussion on a particular burger van, her dissent be recorded; and
- (iii) to note the view of some members, who were also members of the Civic Licensing Committee, that it was their opinion that their positions would be compromised when considering street traders' licences by that Committee.

(b) Special Cases Sub-Committee

The [minute of meeting of the Special Cases Sub-Committee of 28 August 2008](#), a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

(c) Staffing Sub-Committee

The [minute of meeting of the Staffing Sub-Committee of 28 August 2008](#), a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX II**).

(d) Angus Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

The [minute of meeting of the Angus Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers of 17 September 2008](#), a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (APPENDIX III).

4. NOTICE OF MOTION IN TERMS OF STANDING ORDER NO 24(1)**Free School Meals**

Councillor Welsh, who had given the required notice in terms of Standing Order No 24(1), seconded by Councillor Valentine, moved that this Committee:-

- (i) welcomes the announcement by the Scottish Government that all children in P1 to P3 are to be offered free school meals;
- (ii) notes that in line with the agreement in the concordat the necessary funding was to be made available to Councils, in future years, to allow the implementation of this measure; and
- (iii) agrees that this measure will help boost children's health, education and well-being.

COUNCILLOR NIELD, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR THOMSON, MOVED, AS AN AMENDMENT, THAT THE COMMITTEE:-

- (i) REQUESTS THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TO BRING FORWARD A REPORT WITH ALL THE COSTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGES TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS;
- (ii) INSTRUCTS THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TO WRITE TO THE EDUCATION MINISTER REQUESTING "A CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL COMMITMENT FROM THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT THAT ALL ADDITIONAL COSTS WILL BE MET IN FULL BY THEM"; AND
- (iii) INSTRUCTS THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TO REQUEST FROM THE EDUCATION MINISTER INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE THAT THIS EXTENSION TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS WILL IMPROVE CHILDREN'S HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELL-BEING, RATHER THAN JUST INCREASE SCHOOL MEAL UPTAKE AND WHY SHE HAS CHOSEN TO IGNORE THREE TO FIVE YEAR OLDS, WHEN RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT THOSE EARLY YEARS ARE THE MOST FORMATIVE TIME FOR MIND, BODY AND HEALTH DEVELOPMENT.

On a vote being taken, the members voted:-

For the motion:-

Councillors Evans, Gaul, Morrison, Murray, Oswald, Valentine and Welsh (7);

For the amendment:-

Councillors Nield, Thomson, Andrews, Lumgair, May, Myles, Rymer and Shand (8);

No vote:-

Mr Jackson and Mr McHardy.

The amendment was declared carried and became the finding of the meeting.

5. **FORFAR/CARNOUSTIE SCHOOLS PROJECT: EXCEPTIONAL TWO DAY CLOSURES OF CARLOGIE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CARNOUSTIE HIGH SCHOOL**

With reference to Article 13 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 28 August 2008, there was submitted [Report No 965/08](#) by the Director of Education advising members that approval had now been received from the Scottish Government for two additional exceptional closure days for each of Carlogie Primary School and Carnoustie High School which would ease the strain on staff and pupils in connection with the decants required for the above project.

The Report also recommended that the decanting of pupils from their current premises to new premises should be undertaken on these exceptional closure dates and that the two schools should therefore continue to use the 2008/2009 In-Service Closure Days for the same purposes as all other schools.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note that the Scottish Government had authorised the exceptional closure of Carlogie Primary School on Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 December 2008, and for the exceptional closure of Carnoustie High School on Friday 19 December 2008 and Monday 5 January 2009;
- (ii) to confirm that these two schools should be closed to pupils on the dates in question, on the understanding that all staff would be expected to report for duty and to oversee the co-ordination of the removal and re-location of resources and equipment;
- (iii) to confirm that, as a result of the exceptional closure arrangements, both Carlogie Primary School and Carnoustie High School should make use of precisely the same In-Service Closure Days which were available for all other Angus schools this session. for the purposes of staff development; and
- (iv) to express thanks and appreciation to staff who had been involved in all the moves arising from Forfar/Carnoustie Schools Project.

6. **“A CONSULTATION ON THE NEXT GENERATION OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN SCOTLAND” - ANGUS COUNCIL RESPONSE**

There was submitted [Report No 971/08](#) by the Director of Education seeking approval for a response to the consultation exercise undertaken by the Scottish Government in relation to the next generation of qualifications in Scotland.

The Report indicated that the consultation document set out four major proposals as follows:-

- National qualifications at Access, Higher and Advanced Higher to be retained as points of stability.
- A new qualification at SCQF levels 4 and 5 to assimilate Standard Grade/General Credit levels and Intermediate 1 and 2.
- New awards in Literacy and in Numeracy at SCQF levels 3-5.
- Increased flexibility in national qualifications arrangements to better meet the needs of young people.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to approve the terms of the suggested response to the Scottish Government's consultation exercise which had been prepared by a Departmental Working Group, as appended to the Report; and
- (iii) to thank the staff concerned who had been involved in preparing the response.

7. SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE – PROGRESS REPORT

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 25 May 2006, there was submitted [Report No 977/08](#) by the Director of Education outlining ongoing changes to the school meals service in the context of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007.

The Report indicated that an Officer Working Group, which included representation from primary and secondary schools, Tayside Contracts and NHS Tayside had overseen the development of the school meals service and in particular the implementation of recommendations contained in the documents “Hungry for Success” and “Nutrition in Scottish Schools”.

The Report also detailed a number of initiatives which had been introduced and which had been positively embraced by schools, pupils and parents, particularly the increased availability of fruit, vegetables and other healthy options.

A number of future developments were also detailed, namely cashless catering development, implementation of 2008 Nutritional Regulations, free meals for P1-P3 and continuing to work with key partners to ensure the service met the needs of users.

The Committee agreed to note and approve the contents of the Report.

8. STRENGTHENING FOR THE FUTURE – A CONSULTATION ON THE REFORM OF THE CHILDREN’S HEARINGS SYSTEM

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of the Social Work and Health Committee of 25 September 2008, there was submitted [Joint Report No 910/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health and the Director of Education advising members of a consultation on the Scottish Government’s proposals to modernise and strengthen the Children’s Hearings system which included proposals to establish a new national body “The Scottish Children’s Hearings Agency”.

The Report indicated that a new national body would have the benefit of achieving a consistency of practice across all Scottish local authorities but highlighted the danger of losing local flexibility, responsiveness and expertise.

Members expressed strong disagreement to the new proposals and the Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to approve the proposed response to the consultation, as appended to the Report; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Social Work and Health and the Director of Education to include members’ comments and concerns in the response.

9. HMle FULL FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION OF SERVICES TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN THE ANGUS AREA

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of the Social Work and Health Committee of 25 September 2008, there was submitted [Joint Report No 909/08](#) by the Director of Social Work and Health, the Director of Education and the Director of Neighbourhood Services advising members of notification by HMle of the full follow-through inspection of services to protect children in the Angus area.

The Report indicated that the follow-through inspection had commenced on 20 October 2008 and thereafter the inspectors were undertaking a range of interviews and focus groups with staff to ascertain the progress in respect of the remaining points of action outlined in their report of February 2007.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Reports; and

- (ii) to instruct the relevant Directors to report to their respective Committees at a future date on the outcome of the full follow-through inspection.

10. PITKENNEDY PRIMARY SCHOOL: DISPOSAL OF BUILDING

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 11 August 2005, there was submitted [Joint Report No 978/08](#) by the Director of Education and the Director of Corporate Services outlining proposals to declare the former Pitkenney Primary School building and playing field surplus to requirements.

The Report indicated that there were no plans to make any future educational use of the building and no other Council department had indicated any interest in the property.

COUNCILLOR NIELD, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR THOMSON, MOVED THAT THIS COMMITTEE, FOR ITS INTEREST, AGREE:-

- (i) TO NOTE THE CONTENTS OF THE REPORT; AND
- (ii) TO FORMALLY DECLARE PITKENNEDY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PLAYING FIELD AS SURPLUS TO EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

Councillor Gaul, seconded by Councillor Oswald, moved, as an amendment, that this Committee should formally declare Pitkenney Primary School and playing field as surplus to educational requirements but that they be not disposed of on the open market with a view to the site possibly being utilised for affordable housing.

On a vote being taken, the members voted:-

For the motion:-

Councillors Nield, Thomson, Andrews, Lumgair, May, Myles, Rymer and Salmond (8);

For the amendment:-

Councillors Evans, Gaul, Morrison, Murray, Oswald, Valentine and Welsh (7);

No vote:-

Mr Jackson and Mr McHardy.

The motion was declared carried.

Councillor Oswald, seconded by Councillor Morrison, moved as a further amendment that consideration of Report No 978/08 be deferred to enable the Director of Neighbourhood Services to consider the possibility of retaining the site as part of a potential land bank.

On a vote being taken, the members voted:-

For the original motion:-

Councillors Nield, Thomson, Andrews, Lumgair, May, Myles, Rymer and Salmond (8);

For the amendment:-

Councillors Evans, Gaul, Morrison, Murray, Oswald, Valentine and Welsh (7);

No vote:-

Mr Jackson and Mr McHardy.

The motion was declared carried and became the finding of the meeting.

11. ANGUS LEARNING FESTIVAL

It was reported that all Angus schools were mounting events to publicise and to celebrate their individual successes from 27 October to 5 November 2008, with many of these involving parents and taking place in the evening.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the details of these events, copies of which had been circulated;
- (ii) to note that all members of this Committee wishing to attend any of these events would be made most welcome; and
- (iii) to instruct the Director of Education to issue details of the events to the church representatives on this Committee and other members of the Council.