

## ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **EDUCATION COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Thursday 27 November 2008 at 4.00 pm.

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

**Church Representatives:** Mr BILL SIMPSON and Mrs PATRICIA MILLAR.

**Teacher Representatives:** Mr PHILIP JACKSON and Mr BRIAN McHARDY.

Councillor NIELD, Convener, in the Chair.

### 1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Rob Murray with Councillor Ralph Palmer substituting.

### 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 22 October 2008](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

#### (b) Special Cases Sub-Committee

The [minute of meeting of the Special Cases Sub-Committee of 22 October 2008](#), a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX I**).

### 4. 2009/2010 REVENUE BUDGET

With reference to Article 19 of the minute of meeting of the Corporate Services Committee of 12 June 2008, there was submitted [Report No 1172/08](#) by the Director of Corporate Services advising the Committee of the latest position with regard to the preparation of the Education Department's 2009/2010 Revenue Budget and associated issues.

Appended to the Report was a summary of the departmental provisional base budget for 2009/2010 as submitted to, and subsequently reviewed by, the Head of Finance.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report for its interest at this stage in the budget process; and
- (ii) to note that more detailed reports, with specific recommendations, would be brought forward later in the Revenue Budget cycle.

### 5. 2008/2012 FINANCIAL PLAN AND 2009/2010 CAPITAL BUDGET

With reference to Article 20 of the minute of meeting of the Corporate Services Committee of 12 June 2008, there was submitted [Report No 1173/08](#) by the Director of Corporate Services advising the Committee of the latest position with regard to the preparation of the 2008/2012 Financial Plan (incorporating the 2009/2010 Capital Budget) for the Education Department.

Appended to the Report was the Departmental Financial Plan submission for 2008/2012 as returned to the Head of Finance and subsequently reviewed by the Capital Budget Sub-Group.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report for its interest at this stage in the Financial Plan process; and
- (ii) to note that more detailed reports with specific recommendations would be brought forward later in the Financial Plan cycle.

## **6. EDUCATION BUDGET MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2008**

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 28 August 2008, there was submitted [Joint Report No 1174/08](#) by the Director of Education and the Director of Corporate Services advising members of the projected revenue and capital expenditure in comparison to budget in respect of the Education Department, based on the expenditure and income to 30 September 2008 and providing comment on the more significant variances arising.

The Report indicated a projected year-end underspend of £146,000 on the 2008/2009 Education Revenue Budget and while there were no proposals to utilise this balance at present, the situation would continue to be monitored closely.

The nominal projected 2008/2009 Capital Budget additional spend of £7,000 would be managed within the overall Education Capital Budget allocations covering financial years 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to note that the Director of Education and the Director of Corporate Services would continue to monitor the position closely to ensure the most effective use was made of available resources.

## **7. SERVICE REVIEW: JOINT WORKING BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH**

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of the Social Work and Health Committee of 13 November 2008, there was submitted [Joint Report No 1136/08](#) by the Director of Education and the Director of Social Work and Health, together with the revised strategy framework document referred to following a recent review of joint working between the Education and Social Work and Health Departments.

The Report indicated that following a meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee on 30 October 2007, one of the service reviews highlighted was a further development of joint Working between Social Work, Education and other agencies to ensure that there was real improvement to multi-agency working for the benefit of school pupils and families.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed to note the contents of the recently undertaken review, as appended to the Report.

## **8. SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAYS 2009/2010**

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 24 April 2008, there was submitted [Report No 1175/08](#) by the Director of Education detailing a recent consultation exercise on school terms and holidays for 2009/2010 and recommending that a final decision be now taken in this regard.

The Report indicated that a consultation exercise had been undertaken with schools, Parent Councils and trade unions.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to note the outcome of a discussion by the Central Consultative Committee on this issue, following its meeting held earlier this day;
- (iii) to approve the final schedule of school term and holiday dates for 2009/2010 as detailed in Appendix 2(b) of the Report;
- (iv) to instruct the Director of Education to undertake further consultation on the most appropriate dates for the October 2010 holidays; and
- (v) to instruct the Director of Education to continue to maintain a dialogue with neighbouring Councils with a view to achieving as much harmony as possible in respect of future school holiday dates.

## 9. PROPOSAL TO OFFER FREE SCHOOL MEALS TO P1 - P3 PUPILS

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 October 2008, there was submitted [Report No 1176/08](#) by the Director of Education highlighting a number of issues relating to the Scottish Government's proposals to allow free school meals to be provided to all P1 - P3 pupils.

The Report indicated that based on the children registered, the uptake of free school meals in Angus was currently running at approximately 90% and in some schools, accommodation pressures would be faced specifically with regard to dining facilities which, if a policy of free schools meals for all P1 - P3 pupils was implemented, might require some capital expenditure, providing building improvements were feasible.

The Report also indicated that while there was a Concordat commitment to implementing free school meals with effect from August 2010, the proposed legislation was likely to provide Councils with a power to provide free school meals to all P1 - P3 pupils and, while an individual Council might be breaking the Concordat by not taking up that power, such an approach might not break that Council's Single Outcome Agreement and would not breach the proposed legislation.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Education to bring forward further reports as and when decisions were required to be made relating to future plans for the provision of free school meals to P1 - P3 pupils.

## 10. CLASS SIZES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

There was submitted [Report No 1177/08](#) by the Director of Education outlining a proposed way in which maximum class sizes in primary schools could be reduced.

The Report reminded members of the statements with regard to class sizes signed in 2007 in the Concordat between Scottish Government and Local Government and advised of the current requirements which govern class sizes in primary schools in addition to the Concordat commitment.

The Report proposed that the Council:-

- set a target maximum pupil/teacher ratio in P1 - P3 in each school of 27:1;
- set a target maximum pupil/teacher ratio in P4 - P7 in each school of 30:1 (to apply initially only in P4 but to be phased in entirely by August 2012);
- adjust the existing teacher staffing standard for schools with a primary pupil roll of 110 pupils or more; and

- retain sufficient flexibility in the teacher staffing budget to allow for the allocation of an additional teacher for the school session (full-time or part-time) to any school which otherwise might be unable to attain the target maxima.

The Committee agreed to note and endorse the proposals contained in the Report.

#### **11. CONSULTATION ON BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGIES IN SCHOOLS: DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR EDUCATION AUTHORITIES**

There was submitted [Report No 1178/08](#) by the Director of Education outlining a proposed response to the draft guidance issued by the Scottish Government with regard to the use of biometric technologies in schools, comments on which were required by 4 December 2008.

The Report indicated that the draft guidance was intended for education authorities, head teachers and parent councils with a view to providing education authorities, schools and parent councils with some of the basic information they required in relation to biometric technologies and its potential use within schools, together with some of the issues to be carefully considered before such a system was put in place. The purpose of the guidance was also to provide good practice in implementing biometric systems within schools.

The Report also indicated that biometric technology made use of physical or behavioural characteristics which were unique to each individual and which changed little over a period of time. Fingerprints/scans were an example and detail could be measured and recorded for subsequent identification purposes.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the proposed terms of the response to the Scottish Government on this issue, as detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the Report.

#### **12. EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE WORKFORCE: FUTURE SUPPORT FOR TRAINING INCLUDING ACCREDITED TRAINING**

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 24 April 2008, there was submitted [Report No 1179/08](#) by the Director of Education providing an update on developments in relation to the training of early years staff and seeking approval for a proposal to maintain a commitment to supporting the training commitments of partner providers in Angus.

The Report indicated that the joint Scottish Government and COSLA Early Years and Early Intervention policy statement, which had been published in March 2008, emphasised the importance of local authorities working more closely with delivery partners on strategy and action and developing a suitable workforce to develop the framework to be published by the Scottish Government.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to note the intention not to undertake a further tender exercise to secure, from a single provider, the delivery of SVQ accredited training in relation to "Children's Care, Learning and Development" standards;
- (iii) to endorse current commitments to assist partner providers on pre-school services in Angus to meet the training needs of their staff including needs associated with SVQ accredited programmes; and
- (iv) to approve, in particular, the proposal that the basis for funding providers of pre-school services who had entered into a formal partnership with the Council should be amended to take account of accredited training needs.

**13. SCHOOL CONVEYANCE CONTRACTS - REVIEW OF CONTRACT PRICES**

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 28 August 2008, there was submitted [Joint Report No 1180/08](#) by the Director of Education and the Director of Infrastructure Services advising members of the fuel related inflationary increase to school conveyance contracts applied from 1 October 2008.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to note inflationary increase of 1.66% which had been applied to school conveyance contracts with effect from 1 October 2008; and
- (iii) to note that any further increase applied would be reported to future meetings of this Committee.

**14. RESULTS OF TENDER FOR SCHOOL CONVEYANCE CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS**

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 28 August 2008, there was submitted [Joint Report No 1181/08](#) by the Director of Education and the Director of Infrastructure Services detailing the results of tenders for school conveyance contracts for home to school transport and music centre contracts which had been awarded since the main re-tendering exercise had been undertaken for the start of the current academic session.

The Committee agreed to note the award of contracts made by the Director of Education and the Director of Infrastructure Services in terms of their delegated powers under Section 16.12(b) and Appendix 2 of the Council's Financial Regulations, as detailed in the Report,

**15. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SERVICE PLAN 2008/2009: PROGRESS REPORT**

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 November 2007, there was submitted [Report No 1182/08](#) by the Director of Education advising members of progress being made by the Education Department in implementing the actions set out in the Department's Service Plan.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.