

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 10 JANUARY 2017

CHANGES TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL WEEK

REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report highlights the progress made in planning for the previously agreed changes to the secondary school week. It summarises the work that has been undertaken with all eight Angus secondary schools and seeks approval for the final arrangements in order to ensure a smooth transition to the new structure of the secondary school week in August 2017.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the progress on the detailed planning for successful implementation by August 2017.
- (ii) Remove the 10 minute daily check in and approve the preference of Angus' eight secondary schools to establish a 33 period week of 50 minutes per period.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit
- Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At the Children and Learning Committee on 12 February 2015, Report 81/15 was approved to consult with stakeholders regarding the structure of the Secondary school week. Following on from this, consultation was carried out with Secondary school staff and Parent Councils in September 2015.

3.2. On 10 December 2015, Angus Council considered report 434/15, on the consultation with Secondary School staff and Parent Councils regarding proposed changes to the school week. The report detailed the results of survey completed by 216 secondary school staff which found that 64.4% of respondents wished a change in the current school week, with 55.1% supporting a change to a thirty three period week. A majority of Parent Councils at that time were also in favour of changes to the Secondary school week. Elected Members asked for further detailed consultation with all stakeholders. As noted in the minutes, the motion carried:

(V) AGREES TO FURTHER DETAILED CONSULTATION WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS (AS OUTLINED IN APPENDIX 1 TO THE REPORT); AND

(VI) REQUESTS A FURTHER REPORT IN MAY 2016 OUTLINING PROGRESS.

3.3 On the 16th June 2016, on the basis of further detailed consultation, Angus Council agreed with the Children and Learning Committee Report 204/16, to move to the new secondary school week from August 2017 with the following recommendations:

- (I) TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACCEPT THE FINDINGS OF THE DETAILED CONSULTATION ON THE SECONDARY SCHOOL WEEK;
- (II) THAT ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS MOVE TO A CONSISTENT AND COORDINATED THIRTY-THREE PERIOD WEEK TIMETABLE STRUCTURE FROM AUGUST 2017;
- (III) THAT THE MODEL OF FOUR SEVEN PERIOD DAYS AND ONE FOUR PERIOD DAY WHICH INCLUDED A DAILY TEN MINUTE CHECK-IN PERIOD WOULD OPERATE CONSISTENTLY IN ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS FROM AUGUST 2017;
- (IV) THAT THE SHORTER FOUR DAY PERIOD WOULD OCCUR WEEKLY on a Friday from August 2017;
- (V) TO REQUEST STAFF IN THE CHILDREN AND LEARNING DIRECTORATE AND SCHOOLS TO ENGAGE WITH ANGUS ALIVE, COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT, DUNDEE AND ANGUS COLLEGE SPORTS ACADEMY AND LOCAL SPORTS CLUBS TO OFFER HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE SHORTER DAY (Friday afternoon opportunities throughout Angus);
- (VI) TO REQUEST STAFF IN THE CHILDREN AND LEARNING DIRECTORATE AND SCHOOLS TO ENGAGE WITH EMPLOYERS AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO OFFER EMPLOYABILITY EXPERIENCES FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE SHORTER DAY (Friday afternoon opportunities throughout Angus);
- (VII) TO APPROVE THE INCREASED TRANSPORT COSTS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE CHANGE AND TO REQUEST THAT FURTHER DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS BE DEVELOPED BY THE DIRECTORATE IN CONJUNCTION WITH SCHOOL TRANSPORT;
- (VIII) THAT FURTHER WORK BE UNDERTAKEN IN SCHOOLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES TO AGREE THE LENGTH OF THE LUNCH TIME PERIOD; AND
- (IX) THAT A FURTHER REPORT BE BROUGHT BACK TO THE CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE OUTLINING THE PROGRESS WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION IN NOVEMBER 2016.

In considering the above recommendations, the terms of a motion were revised so that there could be flexibility with regard to what day the shorter four period day fell on and was delegated to the Strategic Director – Children and Learning.

- 3.4 In accordance with Council's above decision, it was confirmed to Children and Learning Committee on 8 November 2016 that the school shorter day will take place on a Friday (schedule 4, 387/16).

4. IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

- 4.1 A Schools and Learning Working Group was established to undertake the detailed planning required to move to the agreed secondary school week. The group was made up of four Depute Head Teachers and a Quality Improvement Officer and it reported a number of recommendations in October 2016. All eight secondary head teachers then considered these recommendations. The group also consulted the following essential documents:

- 'How good is our school?' 4th Edition (Education Scotland) 2015
- 'Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education' (Scottish Government) 2016
- 'A Statement for Practitioners from HM Chief Inspector of Education' (Education Scotland) 2016
- Developing the Young Workforce Career Education Standard (3-18) (Education Scotland) 2016

4.2 At all times the group considered how best to deliver the optimum educational outcomes for our young people. The group carefully considered one feature of the new structure where they wanted to be clear there was an educational benefit; the daily 10 minute check in. The group summarised the positives to this as:

- Daily contact – young people see the same teacher every day thereby enabling the identification of young people for whom there are immediate pastoral concerns
- Assemblies could be arranged at these times. However, this will inevitably result in the encroachment into a teaching period
- Some administration tasks could be undertaken

However as this model is effectively a 32 +1 period week as one of the additional periods has been utilised for the 10 minute 'check in'. The reduction of additional periods from 3 to 2 has a number of consequences:

- The 'shorter' day of 4 periods will be a constraint with respect to day/period spread.
- The consequence of this could be that subjects with a 5 period allocation may need to be time tabled twice in one day
- Assuming one of the additional periods is allocated to Personalised Support, only one additional curricular period will be made available
- An allocation of an additional period to English and Maths in S4, would have a consequence that S4 young people would not have a Personalised Support period. Ensuring pupil entitlement to effective pupil support in S4 will be challenging

4.2.1 The group concluded that there was no need for a 10 minute check in. The focus on pupil wellbeing in a 10 minute check in is at odds with the Curriculum for Excellence principle that Health and Wellbeing is a responsibility for all. All staff should be 'checking in' at the start of every teaching period. Even with a check in period, schools would need systems in place where teacher concerns could be communicated and responded to timeously. It is questionable how well a 'check in' teacher would get to know young people even with a daily contact compared to class teachers who may see a pupil up to 5 times a week. The timing of the check in period would be crucial, should it be placed in the timetable immediately before the morning interval may result in truancy or late arrival. The consequence of this being further time committed in following up non-attendance. Movement of young people around the school is increased. The time taken for all young people to arrive at the check in period will reduce the 'useful' time available. It is questionable whether many meaningful tasks could be carried out in the time available

4.2.2 The group then considered an alternative option, that one 50 minute personalised support session is available for each young person every week. The advantages to this structure are:

- The 'shorter' day is 5 periods in length providing more flexibility with respect to day/period spread
- Coping with three consecutive periods will be challenging for some young people with the risk of reduction in productivity and increase in behaviour issues. Having the three period block at the start of the day rather than the afternoon will minimise this risk
- Maintaining 33 x 50 minute blocks will enable more efficient deployment of staff in respect to non-contact time
- Slightly earlier finish time at the end of the day is better for extracurricular activities and staff meetings
- A two period afternoon enables current arrangements for S5 core PE to continue
- All three additional periods can be allocated as per the needs of individual schools
- All year groups can have a timetabled Personalised Support period

- Two additional periods will provide opportunities for creative and innovative curriculum developments

The disadvantages identified are:

- A lack of a daily contact will require changes to administration procedures
- The removal of the form time will present challenges in ensuring pupil entitlement to effective pupil support.

4.2.3 The group presented a strong case that one 50 minute support period best meets the educational needs of our young people. This view is shared by all eight secondary schools. The preferred structure for the secondary school week is:

MONDAY								
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Break	Period 4	Period 5	Lunch	Period 6	Period 7
8.55-9.45	9.45-10.35	10.35-11.25	11.25-11.40	11.40-12.30	12.30-13.20	13.20-14.10	14.10-15.00	15.00-15.50
TUESDAY								
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Break	Period 4	Period 5	Lunch	Period 6	Period 7
8.55-9.45	9.45-10.35	10.35-11.25	11.25-11.40	11.40-12.30	12.30-13.20	13.20-14.10	14.10-15.00	15.00-15.50
WEDNESDAY								
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Break	Period 4	Period 5	Lunch	Period 6	Period 7
8.55-9.45	9.45-10.35	10.35-11.25	11.25-11.40	11.40-12.30	12.30-13.20	13.20-14.10	14.10-15.00	15.00-15.50
THURSDAY								
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Break	Period 4	Period 5	Lunch	Period 6	Period 7
8.55-9.45	9.45-10.35	10.35-11.25	11.25-11.40	11.40-12.30	12.30-13.20	13.20-14.10	14.10-15.00	15.00-15.50
FRIDAY								
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Break	Period 4	Period 5			
8.55-9.45	9.45-10.35	10.35-11.25	11.25-11.40	11.40-12.30	12.30-13.20			

Adopting the model above will result in three additional periods being allocated per year group as a result of the re-configuration of 5 x 30 minute form time to 3 x 50 minute teaching periods. It is assumed that all schools will allocate one of these periods as a Personalised Support period, thereby releasing two additional periods per year group.

4.3 The group further considered a range of practical issues that will be addressed in the move to the new secondary school week. These included:

- Personalised support
- Attendance checks and administration issues
- Pastoral issues
- Staffing arrangements
- June transition timetable

Further work has also been undertaken with a range of partners including Angus Alive, Dundee and Angus College and sports clubs to establish our offer for our young people on the shorter day.

5. JUNE TRANSITION TIMETABLE

The new 33 period week structure will not be implemented until August 2017, which has implications, as all eight schools would normally commence the new timetable session from end of May/early June. Clearly it is not practicable for schools to design a temporary timetable for June based on the current model and a second 33 period week timetable for August. Arrangements will be put into place to run a 33 period week timetable within the current timetable structure.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Further work has been undertaken to align the transport arrangements across all eight secondary schools. This has resulted in a reduction to previously estimated costs. Changes to transport arrangements will now cost less than £70,000. These costs will be met from efficiencies within children and learning non-devolved directorate budget.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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