

ANGUS COUNCIL

SPECIAL CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 4 MARCH 2021

EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING STAFFING BUDGET EFFICIENCIES

REPORT BY KELLY MCINTOSH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report summarises the progress of the implementation of previously agreed efficiencies to the school staffing budget, as part of a range of council wide efficiencies, and provides a proposed amendment to savings as currently detailed in the change programme.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Children and Learning Committee:

- (i) Notes that the increasing secondary school roll has created a budget pressure for the 2021/22 budget setting process and the financial impact is estimated at £255,000 based on expected pupil numbers. This is before council for consideration later today;
- (ii) Notes the budget efficiencies realised from the school staffing budget since April 2018 as outlined in Section 3.3;
- (iii) Notes an amendment to the previously agreed budget efficiencies necessitating the continued gradual reduction of additional primary teachers as outlined in Section 6.2, which is before Council for consideration later today;
- (iv) Notes the recommended revised annual teacher savings as detailed in Section 6.2 will be subject to annual monitoring as to impact on service delivery and pupil-teacher ratio;
- (v) Notes that any future proposed alterations to the savings outlined in table 3 as the result of annual monitoring will be presented to Committee for a decision.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/COUNCIL PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the –

Angus Council Plan:

Maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities
Create equity by focussing services on those who need them most

Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

- The best start in life for children
- Improved physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- More opportunities for people to achieve success

The Tayside Plan for children young people and families 2017-20:

- Reduce inequalities and disadvantage
- Protect the most vulnerable from harm
- Take the right action to prevent needs arising in the first place
- Provide the right support to meet needs at the earliest appropriate time
- Deliver individualised, proportionate and whole family-based support
- Provide services which are experienced as integrated and consistent
- Involve children, young people and parents in the design of services

- Develop holistic services for children, parents and communities
- Improve outcomes

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Council and committee approved the following recommendations in February 2020, report [92/20](#) refers:

(iii) Notes that annual teacher savings as agreed in (ii) will be subject to annual monitoring as to the impact on service delivery and pupil-teacher ratio;

(iv) Notes that any alterations to the savings outlined in table 3 as the result of annual monitoring will be highlighted to committee.

3.2 Scottish Government requires that all local authorities report on the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) each September. The Scottish Government seek to maintain a national PTR of 13.7. Table 1 below sets out the Angus Council returns for 2019 and 2020.

Table 1 – Pupil-Teacher Ratio

Year	Measure	Result
Sept 2019	PTR not including teachers funded by Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)	13.19
Sept 2019	PTR including teachers funding by PEF	13.01
Sept 2020	PTR not including teachers funded by PEF or additional funding as a result of Covid-19	13.34
Sept 2020	PTR including teachers funded by PEF or additional funding as a result of Covid-19	12.76

3.3 Budget efficiencies derived from teacher savings were subject of reports to special Children and Learning Committee and special Angus Council, reports [69/18](#), [67/19](#) and [92/20](#) refer.

Savings made from the reduction of teaching staff made to the end of financial year 2020/21 are outlined in table 2 below.

Table 2 – teacher savings

Date	Description of area of efficiency in staffing	Amount
April 2018	Secondary – revision to staffing formula	£453,000
	Secondary – reduction to absence cover	£100,000
	Primary – visiting teachers	£77,000
	Primary – Support meeting Cover	£8,000
	Primary - teachers	£94,000
	Primary – reduction to absence cover	£28,000
Total 2018/19		£760,000
April 2019	Secondary- revision to staffing formula	£227,000
	Primary – visiting teachers	£46,000

	Primary - teachers	£204,000
Total 2019/20		£477,000
April 2020	Primary- visiting teachers	£310,000
	Primary- teachers	£304,000
Total 2020/21		£614,000
Total saving made to date		£1,851,000

In summary since the school year starting in August 2019 changes to the staffing base budget have resulted in the removal of:

16 full time equivalent (FTE) secondary teachers;

10 FTE visiting specialists. Visiting specialists deliver learning in Art, Drama, Music and Physical Education for children in our primary schools;

8.5FTE additional primary teachers previously allocated across the nine schools in our most deprived datazones as identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD);

5.5FTE primary teachers previously allocated across all schools as 'additionality' to allow for school improvement activity to be undertaken and targeted support for children.

4. CURRENT POSITION

Secondary Staffing

- 4.1 The increasing secondary roll has created a budget pressure expected to be in the region of £255,000 for 2021/22. This is based on expected pupil numbers. There is a risk that this may increase if more young people elect to remain into S5 and S6 than usual due to the continued disruption of schooling caused by Covid-19.

Primary Staffing

- 4.2 The planned reduction of visiting specialist teachers in the primary sector from 18FTE to 8FTE between 2018 and 2020 is complete, realising an overall saving of £433,000. Recommendations (iii) and (iv) from report 59/18 refer.

The redesign of this service means less time for specialist provision of art, music, drama and physical education across primary schools in Angus. Visiting teachers are now deployed to work alongside class teachers to upskill them in the delivery of art, drama and music. Therefore the benefit of learning from a subject specialist has been reduced.

Visiting teachers no longer support the delivery of reduced class contact time (RCT) for class teachers. This negatively impacts on the overall management time available to school leadership teams in our primary schools as school leaders are now required to cover more RCT.

The planned reduction of a further 25.5FTE primary teaching staff has seen 14FTE removed to date. All 8.5 FTE of the teachers assigned to work in the nine schools located within the most disadvantaged datazones have been removed.

5.5 FTE primary teachers previously used to provide 'additionality' to enable a degree of flexibility for absence cover and to allow planned school improvement activity to be undertaken have been removed.

Very often, in situations requiring absence cover the senior leadership team are required to reduce their management time in order to undertake a greater teaching commitment. Continued reduction in primary teacher numbers and the subsequent reduction in management time will affect the progress of our school improvement activity.

With the phased re-opening of schools to wider groups of children and young people and continued uncertainty around the community transmission of Covid-19 and any new variants we expect teacher absence to increase.

Evaluation of Primary Head Teachers

- 4.3 Report 92/20 recommended that the continued annual teacher savings be subject to monitoring. Session 2020/21 has not allowed for a full evaluation. However, the Angus Schools Partnership (ASP) were asked to liaise with colleagues in order to gain a representative view across primary Head Teachers.

ASP is attended by one nominated primary Head Teacher representative per cluster. Their role is to liaise with colleagues and represent their views at meetings. In January 2021 members of ASP were asked to comment on the reduction in primary staffing to date. 60% of primary Head Teachers responded.

The findings of this review were:

- All of the respondents work in excess of their 35 hour week, with more than 80% stating that they work in excess of 50 hours each week. Almost all stated that they work at weekends.
- Work out with the school day is required in order to complete strategic planning or improvement planning work.
- School leaders are increasingly being used for class cover, either due to staff absence or to cover RCT.
- Time dedicated to raising attainment interventions and targeted intervention for children requiring the most support is reducing year on year.
- Senior leadership roles, especially the role of Head Teacher, is thought to be less attractive due to the increasing workload and decreasing staff resource.

5. NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

- 5.1 Session 2020/21 has seen learning disrupted for all of our children and young people. The Scottish Government 2021 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan clearly sets out national priorities and 'overarching ambitions'. The vision remains 'excellence through raising attainment' and 'achieving equity with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap'. This updated version of the NIF states that the primary focus is on recovery and support:

"Since the onset of COVID-19, the Scottish Government has placed protecting the interests of children and young people at the heart of our response. Schools remaining safe, open and welcoming – with a focus on health, wellbeing and intensified support for reducing inequity and enabling the highest quality of learning and teaching – has been a critical component of that priority. We know lockdown has been particularly difficult for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds."

- 5.2 The Scottish Government Equity Audit (deepening the understanding of the impact COVID-19 and school building closures had on children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and setting clear areas of focus for accelerating recovery) 2021, conducted between September and November 2020 notes that:

"International evidence generally shows that school building closures are likely to have had a negative effect on pupil progress and attainment, and socio-economically deprived children and young people are amongst those who may have been most negatively affected." and that

"The findings of this audit reiterate the importance of an ongoing, long-term and systemwide focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. They also highlight the scale and potential depth of the impacts of the pandemic, and recognise that the full extent of those may not become fully visible for some time."

- 5.3 Angus Council's aspirations include 'maximising inclusion and reducing inequalities' and 'creating equity by focusing services on those who need them most'.

At a time when our school buildings remain closed to most of our children and young people; when levels of engagement with remote learning vary greatly; when our annual education plan focuses on wellbeing, the progress in learning of identified groups and ensuring that every child and young person is supported appropriately; a further reduction in teacher numbers will mean that we can provide less support at a time when our children and young people require more support than before.

Prior to the pandemic young people residing in our most disadvantaged datazones already attained less. Our 'looked after' young people, a group with specific additional vulnerabilities who have experienced significant instability or challenges in other aspects of their lives, achieved less than their peers.

Throughout the pandemic we have supported increasing numbers of families. Numbers of those entitled to free school meals and those seeking additional financial help continue to increase.

6. PROPOSALS

6.1 Session 2021/2022 will continue to be a period of educational recovery. A further reduction in primary staff at this time is counter to the national and local policy context, in that the reduction will further reduce any 'additionality' designed to support those most in need.

6.2 To date £1,851,000 has been removed from the teacher staffing budget since April 2018. The recommendation to postpone any further savings in 2021/22 and to spread the remaining £548,000 more evenly over 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 is illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – proposed savings

Year	Previously agreed saving	Recommended saving
2021/22	£300,000	nil
2022/23	£198,000	£183,000
2023/24	£50,000	£183,000
2024/25	nil	£182,000
Total	£548,000	£548,000

6.3 An evaluation of how current primary staffing levels impact on how our learners are supported and the requirement for school leaders to sacrifice time for strategic leadership and school improvement activity will be conducted in session 2021/22.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 It is important to stress that savings in teaching staff costs made by the Council to date have been necessary because of the pressures on the Council's finances and in particular several years of real terms reductions in government grant funding for core services. The Council has had to save more than £61m from its budget in the last 8 years and, as its biggest area of expenditure, it has not been possible to avoid savings having to be made in teaching staff costs.

7.2 The savings outlined in table 3 are part of the Angus Council Change Programme. Whilst realigning the savings as recommended will result in the same overall budget efficiency being made, pending further annual monitoring, the timing of the savings is altered.

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Please see Equality Impact Assessment.

9. CONSULTATION

9.1 The proposals outlined in this report have been subject to discussion with teacher trade union representatives and the Angus Schools Partnership, a representative group of Angus Head Teachers. Statutory officers have also been consulted.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Education Continuity Direction 8 – Scottish Government January 2021
- National Improvement Framework – Scottish Government 2021
- Equity Audit – Scottish Government 2021

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