

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 21 MAY 2001
REPORT ON: MORGAN ACADEMY FIRE
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
REPORT NO: 307-2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an overview of the situation following the recent serious fire at Morgan Academy and makes a proposal for the future.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i note the content of this report
- ii agree in principle to the re-instatement of Morgan Academy on the Forfar Road site as described in paragraph 7.3
- iii instruct the Director of Education in conjunction with Dundee City Council Architectural Services Division and Historic Scotland to undertake early design brief work relating to recommendation ii above, and to bring forward further reports detailing the progress on the various aspects of the proposed re-instatement of Morgan Academy in line with the proposals contained in paragraphs 7.2 to 7.4.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The insurers have appointed McLarens Topliss Loss Adjusters to assist the Council's Risk Manager in ingathering the relevant detail regarding expenditure incurred to date. Information on such expenditure is being collated by the Education Department and passed to the loss adjuster via the Risk Manager for approval. An interim sum of £500,000 to offset against the initial expenditure has been agreed with the insurers.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Morgan Academy is a Grade A listed building of ornate detail and design and is consequently regarded as being of national importance.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 Following the disastrous fire at Morgan Academy on 21 March 2001, the former Rockwell High School building was re-opened late that evening with a view to making the accommodation ready to house Morgan Academy on a temporary basis.

6.2 In order to make the Rockwell building ready to receive the staff and pupils of Morgan Academy the following actions were undertaken by Education Department staff, Tayside Contracts and Dundee Contract Services:

- The former Rockwell High School and Primary School buildings were unboarded and cleaned
- Basic furniture, text books etc were sought on a loan basis from other secondary schools as an interim measure
- A dining centre type catering provision was established by Tayside Contracts
- A salvage exercise was undertaken at the 1994 extension block at Forfar Road once it was declared safe to enter to secure those goods and materials which remained undamaged by the fire
- Additional emergency temporary mobile accommodation units were sourced to cater for the roll of Morgan Academy pupils. (These emergency units are to be replaced by more "permanent" fully serviced units over the summer holidays.)
- An assessment of need for transport home to school, school to DISC and for extra curricular purposes was undertaken and responded to
- Minor re-decoration and refurbishment work is ongoing at the Lawton Road site
- S4 to S6 moved into the school on Monday 26 March 2001 and S1 to S3 moved into the Lawton Road building on a phased basis during the week beginning Monday 16 April 2001

6.3 Additional support for the school in the short to medium term has been put in place as follows:

- The Education Property Officer for Dundee West is temporarily located on the Lawton Road site
- A supply pool Facilities Co-ordinator has been located at Lawton Road to assume responsibility for receiving and dispatching goods
- Additional clerical support has been given to the school to assist with the setting up of office facilities and large scale ordering of materials
- Fast track systems have been put in place via the Contracts Officer for procurement of books, stationery, furniture and other equipment

6.4 Communication arrangements were put in place as follows:

- The Convener of Education and the Director of Education held a meeting in the Caird Hall for parents and other interested parties on the evening of Monday 26 March 2001
- The Director of Education met with Morgan Academy Former Pupils' Association on Tuesday 27 March 2001
- The Director of Education and the Education Services Manager (Central) met with the School Board on Thursday 29 March 2001
- The Director of Education and the Head Teacher of the school communicated regularly with parents by letter in the week immediately following the fire and the Director made regular visits to the Lawton Road site
- The Head Teacher is preparing newsletter updates for parents on an ongoing basis
- As well as the additional support that has been in place at paragraph 6.3 above there is daily contact from the Education Department with the Head Teacher and staff at Lawton Road
- Weekly meetings have been established with the loss adjusters and staff from Dundee City Council Finance Department, Education Department, Architectural Services and the City Engineer to ensure that actions and proposals to make the Lawton Road site appropriate for housing Morgan Academy are taken with the full approval and financial backing of the insurers

6.5

The current situation at the Forfar Road site is described below:

- The City Engineer has overall charge of the ordering of events at the Forfar Road site
- Security provision has been made at this site up until such time as the site is taken over by a main re-instatement contractor in the event that the Education Committee gives approval for Morgan Academy to be re-instated as described in paragraph 7.3 below
- Scaffolding has been erected to enable façade retention works to be undertaken
- Advice on the extent and methodology for removing masonry has now been obtained from the Architects Simpson and Brown of Edinburgh. Simpson and Brown's role is to advise on the down-taking, recording, archiving and storage of all masonry elements that may be re-used
- This firm of Architects has a reputation of being a leading practice specialising in conservation works. This firm is currently working in Dundee on a number of buildings including Gardyne's House in the High Street and St Paul's Episcopal Church
- Arrangements for the safe storage of down-taken materials have been made on the lawned area on the Forfar Road site
- The internal condition of the main building is precarious and careful demolition works are presently being undertaken
- The 1994 extension block is intact and is presently undergoing professional de-humidifying treatment

7.0

PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE

7.1

The loss adjuster for the insurers has confirmed that it is essential that immediate action be taken to develop with the client the brief for a replacement school. This work has been deemed urgent irrespective of who is eventually commissioned as Architect and as such the fees for this work are counted as a legitimate claim for payment by the insurers.

7.2

Consequently it is proposed that Dundee City Council Architectural Services Division are engaged to develop a brief and initial design solutions in conjunction with appropriate Education Department staff for a re-instatement of Morgan Academy on the Forfar Road site.

7.3

At this stage the proposal is to restore the original façade of Morgan Academy and construct within the footprint of the building a purpose-built secondary school incorporating the 1994 extension block which survived the fire. This proposal will be the subject of a separate detailed report once all technical information has been considered by appropriate Dundee City Council service departments and final conclusions and agreements have been reached with the insurers. Early indications suggest that this project would be ideally suited for a partnered contract and Dundee City Council Architectural Services Division will form a multi-disciplinary team to consider methods of procurement and a proposed programme for the works.

7.4

It is further envisaged that the longer term detailed design solution work would also be best undertaken by a partnered approach led by Dundee City Council Architectural Services Division.

8.0

CONSULTATION

8.1

This report has been the subject of consultation with the Director of Finance, Director of Support Services and Director of Planning and Transportation.

9.0

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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.

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Director of Education

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Date