

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: 22 OCTOBER 2007

REPORT ON: OFFSITE EDUCATION SERVICE

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE
(MANAGEMENT)**

REPORT NO 542-2007

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Committee approval for the expansion and re-designation of the Alternative Education Provision as the Offsite Education Service (OES).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Education Committee is recommended to:

- i. note the contents of this report;
- ii. approve the proposal to rename the alternative education provision as Offsite Education Service
- iii. approve the proposal to expand the number of places available to pupils in three offsite learning centres
- iv. note that the Director of Education will bring a report to Education Committee in January 2009 on the impact of the expanded Offsite Education Service (OES)
- v. note that the Director of Education and Assistant Chief Executive (Management) will process the establishment changes outlined in this report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of implementing the proposals outlined in this report can be met within the overall Education Revenue Budget for Support for Learning in the secondary sector.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Reference is made to the Reports 648-2005, 703-2005 and 67-2006. The objectives of the proposal outlined below include:

- to standardise the management structure of existing provision
- to co-ordinate a diverse range of supports for children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties within a single cohesive and flexible service
- to promote team-work among staff working in different locations
- to provide a clear line management structure for staff
- to create a link between groups and provision supporting school-aged young people and school leavers not in education, employment or training
- to improve the outcomes for young people
- to create a more transparent structure and enhance partnership working across the service and with partners
- to make a major contribution to preventing children and young people from entering residential or secure placements outwith the city

4.2 Background

4.2.1 In agreeing Report 648-2005, the Education Committee took a decision, in principle, to establish an additional (i.e. fourth) offsite education centre.

4.2.2 Education Committee Report 703-2005 approved the publication of the Managing Disruptive Behaviour report which summarised the then existing offsite centres within the alternative education provision as follows:

Name of Provision	Type of Provision	No. of Pupils
Castlepark	Offsite Centre - P6/P7/S1/S2	18
Balerno	Offsite Centre - S3/S4	18
Connect Five	Offsite Centre - S3/S4	18
	TOTAL	54

- 4.2.3 Report 648-2005 makes it clear that the number of children and young people displaying extremely challenging behaviour and requiring offsite places is increasing, to the point where current levels of provision are insufficient.
- 4.2.4 Most significantly, the Balerno facility has been transferred to new premises at Happyhillock at an additional one-off cost of some £50,000. That was the facility which had been previously identified for comprehensive refurbishment to house the proposed additional fourth centre. The previous Balerno facility was condemned as no longer safe structurally; its wooden pillars having rotted to a dangerous degree.
- 4.2.5 It has not subsequently been possible to find a cost-effective alternative site for a fourth centre. Following consultations with staff in existing centres, it has been established that it is possible to accommodate more young people in each than is currently the case.
- 4.2.6 In order to provide the agreed expansion of offsite placements, the existing offsite centres should be expanded and appropriately staffed in order to be able to sustain and manage a further 6 pupils per Offsite Learning Centre giving a 33% increase in placements available.

Offsite Learning Centres	Centre population	New roll
Castlepark	P6/P7/S1/S2	24
Balerno	S3/S4	24
Connect Five	S3/S4	24
	TOTAL	72

4.3 Rationale and Operating Principles of Expanded Service

- 4.3.1 Children and young people who attend the three Offsite Learning Centres experience significant change in circumstances. Because of the highly individualised levels of pastoral and curricular support available to pupils in offsite education, attendance levels increase greatly. Exclusion is rare compared to the experience of referred children and young people before entering offsite. While remaining capable of providing significant challenge to authority and discipline, pupils attending offsite education often attain success in national exams and other award-bearing schemes which they would have been unlikely to attain had they remained in mainstream education.
- 4.3.2 One parent wrote in June 2007 to the Department about her son's experience at one of the Offsite Learning Centres saying, "*I feel compelled to write to you in praise of your staff at [...]. When [my son] was first given a place at [...], he was out of control, unmanageable and completely disillusioned with the education system. [...] I was at my wit's end and had real fears for his impending future. I believe that due to [the staff's] professionalism, dedication, understanding [...] and genuine caring, they have helped change [my son]'s life beyond measure. He is due to leave [...] on Friday and I am proud to say **with** some qualifications. Something I know he would never have achieved had he remained in mainstream. I firmly believe that his re-built self-confidence is attributable to [...] and the staff at [...]. They have also renewed my faith in the education system.*"
- 4.3.3 The offsite learning centres have in the past provided and will continue to provide a level of security and stability that would not have been possible for many of these very challenging and disruptive yet vulnerable young people had they remained in their mainstream schools. Nevertheless, it is clear that, where possible, re-integration into mainstream settings following resolution of existing behavioural and social issues will remain a main aim of supporting children and young people placed in the three Offsite Learning Centres.
- 4.3.4 The overriding operating principles in making this provision are to retain and sustain all children and young people in their mainstream school until such time as the relationships

have broken down to the extent that (i) it is impossible for the child or young person to make meaningful educational progress in that mainstream context (ii) there is a high probability that not offering a placement in an offsite learning centre could result in a child or young person becoming inextricably isolated from mainstream society both socially and educationally. Ultimately, such isolation can lead to anti-social and criminalised behaviour necessitating removal to a residential or secure placement outwith the city.

- 4.3.5 It is proposed that the Offsite Education Service will also include part- or full-time provision delivered in locations other than in mainstream, special schools and the Offsite Learning Centres. Specifically included will be the provision in the current partnership schemes: PACE, Progressions, Choice, Helm Training, and Kick It Kick Off.
- 4.3.6 Following a visit by HMIE to offsite education provision in a national task to identify good practice in this field of education, an Inspector wrote in September 2007: "*The work in Dundee will contribute to the success of the task in highlighting good practice in this area.*" The intention is to provide a sustainable model of offsite education - exemplifying good practice - which will be understood by all partners to provide a finite resource for the city's most disruptive and challenging children and young people.
- 4.3.7 In the new structure, reporting to the Head of Support for Learning, the Head of OES has delegated overall responsibility for quality assurance, staff support, development and review, management of resources and building effective strategic and operational partnerships.

4.4 STAFFING (Ref: APPENDIX)

4.4.1 TEACHING

- 4.4.1.1 There are three separate Offsite Learning Centres; Balerno, Castlepark, Connect 5. Each of these Offsite Learning Centres will have a Depute Head Teacher responsible to the Head of OES. The DHT will be responsible for the teaching staff based in their Centre. In addition, these DHTs will have delegated responsibility to ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum in each centre. Their remit is to ensure that every child and young person referred to the OES has access to an adequate, efficient and flexible curriculum designed to meet their individual needs and ensures they achieve and attain to the best of their ability.
- 4.4.1.2 It is important to establish appropriate staffing levels within the OES. Class sizes in units supporting children with additional support needs arising from social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are maintained at small group level in order to facilitate the intensive educational, social and pastoral support these children and young people require to turn their lives around. Therefore, it is proposed that each expanded offsite learning centre will have the services of 6.5 FTE teachers. The responsibility for the flexible deployment of those teachers within the Service rests with the Head of OES.
- 4.4.1.3 One post is currently subject to a fixed term contract within the CHOICE project which works with young offenders and is managed by DCC Social Work Department. This project is funded from Youth Justice monies. Agreement has been reached with the Social Work Department that this post should be made permanent and will continue to be paid from the Youth Justice budget.
- 4.4.1.4 To enable the service capacity to expand to the proposed levels the following new posts would be established.
 - 1.0 FTE Depute Head Teacher (Connect 5) post.

It is proposed that the current Principal Teacher post be deleted and the incumbent be confirmed as Depute Head Teacher (Connect 5). This will standardise the management structure within the three Offsite Learning Centres.

 - 4.1 FTE teaching posts within the OES
 - 1.0 FTE teaching post to be outposted to the CHOICE project, funded by SWD
- 4.4.1.5 Reference is made to Agenda Note AN281-2002 to the Policy and Resources Committee which approved the establishment of fixed term posts in the *Futures Project* organised and delivered in collaboration with Dundee College. This project is now known as *PACE* and funding for this project has been continued in the interim period. It is proposed,

therefore, to extend the temporary establishment of the following post until 31 March 2008 in the first instance.

1FTE Principal Teacher

4.4.2 SUPPORT STAFF

4.4.2.1 Currently, all three centres have a post of Project Leader (Grade AP7-10: £32,640-£35,118). The ending of the 'project' status of the service provision requires the title *Project Leader* to be revised and it is proposed that this post be re-designated 'Learning Centre Manager'. This post is currently filled by postholders with a variety of professional backgrounds; teaching, social work, and community education. Their principal role will be to manage the support staff with lead responsibility for maintaining close contact with families and providing intensive pastoral and extra-curricular support to each pupil attending the offsite learning centres. The Learning Centre Manager will also have responsibility for the management of the building.

4.4.2.2 In recognition of the work undertaken over an extended period by the current Acting Project Leader at the Balerno Centre, it is proposed to confirm her in the post of Learning Centre Manager at the Balerno Offsite Learning Centre.

4.4.2.3 Each centre has a quota of additional support staff with responsibility for providing pastoral care and educational support. These staff are also in direct contact with parents and families to ensure they are involved as partners in supporting their children's education in offsite learning centres. Appendix 1 shows the proposed staffing configuration for each of the three Offsite Learning Centres. Where there are differences, this is in recognition of the flexibility of approaches required to meet differing levels and types of needs in each of the centres. Proposed changes to support staffing across the service are described below.

4.4.2.4 In order to provide support for teaching staff in maintaining good order within the expanded Offsite Learning Centres, it is proposed that 2 additional Classroom Assistant posts (Grade GS2/3: £14,241-£15,828) are established.

4.4.2.5 In recognition of the work carried out by Kick It Kick Off Learning Centre over seven years during which time the project has been recognised by independent bodies as an example of very good practice at national level and following review of the duties and responsibilities of the current Project Co-ordinator (Grade AP5/PO4: £24,942-£30,084) which confirmed that the post is comparable to the current Project Leaders, it is proposed that this post be re-designated Learning Centre Manager (Kick It Kick Off) (Grade: AP7/10: £32,640-£35,118).

4.4.2.6 In recognition of the increase in numbers attending the PACE (full-time) programme since its inception in 2002 and to ensure consistency and flexibility across the OES, it is proposed that the two fixed-term Student Support Worker posts (Grade AP1 (£15,828-£16,932) be redesignated Educational Welfare Officers, on the same grade. and that a third FTE fixed term Educational Welfare Officer post be established until 31 March 2008 in the first instance.

4.4.2.7 To ensure consistency and flexibility of structure across the OES, it is further proposed:

to delete the vacant post of Senior Community Education Worker Connect 5 (Grade AP5 £24,942-£27,165)

to replace this by establishing 1 FTE post of Pupil Support Worker (Grade CEW (£19,311-£24,942))

4.4.2.8 There is a need to ensure that the related but separate provision for offsite support in the primary sector based at Longhaugh Primary School has the capacity to support families in meeting the needs of their children. Therefore, it is proposed to establish a post of Educational Welfare Officer (Grade AP1 (£15,828-£16,932) attached to that unit with supervision and support provided from within the Offsite Education Service.

4.4.2.9 The overall administration of the OES will be managed by an Administrative Officer (Grade AP2/3- £17,352-£21,189) who, in general, will be responsible for:

- day-to-day administrative support to the Head of OES

- clerical officers in each of the centres
- servicing the Options process
- clerical support dedicated to the partner providers i.e. the Elms
- clerical support for Dudhope House Education Provision and Hospital Teaching which is managed by the Co-ordinator (Additional Support Needs)

It is proposed that the current Administrative Officer (AP1/2 - £15,828-£18,783) - in taking on additional duties and responsibilities - is regraded and confirmed in that post.

4.4.2.10 Administrative and clerical support is required to monitor issues such as staff absences, pupil absences, truancy and budgets. Appendix 1 shows the configuration of administrative and clerical staff deemed necessary to support the delivery of the whole of the OES including servicing the multi-agency Options Group.

4.4.2.11 Following a review of the current clerical support staff complement and in recognition that a designated post is required to deputise in the absence of the Administrative Officer, it is proposed to establish a Senior Clerical Officer post (GS3 - £15,201-£15,828). This post will be filled by moving a member of staff from elsewhere in the Department.

4.5 Links

4.5.1 Through a new Post-16 Options panel, pupils leaving their statutory education from an offsite learning centre will have their views and their needs taken into account and offered an appropriate option or options for post-16 provision in education, employment or training.

4.5.2 The Head of OES will ensure that links with prospective employers and trainers are established as a priority within a post-16 leaving strategy for pupils in S4. In this regard, links with Dundee College will continue to be a priority for the service.

4.5.3 Links with Social Work Department and Leisure and Communities Departments will be maintained and strengthened by the Head of OES to ensure that the type and levels of support offered to pupils in the OES is appropriately personalised according to individual need.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. The major issues have been identified as follows.

5.2 In terms both of equality and anti-poverty, the city's NEET Strategy aims to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training. This proposal will support the city's NEET Strategy by

- developing the personal capacity, interests and opportunities of the pupils of the Offsite Education Service
- integrating them in a supportive social and educational environment
- involving them, individually and in groups, in positive social and cultural activities
- preventing factors which make people vulnerable to poverty
- ensuring safety and security for the pupils and their peers
- engaging with vulnerable and needy children and young people who are hardest to reach in mainstream settings and who can include violent and very disruptive young people

5.3 The increase in provision will mean that the service can support more children and young people who are at very serious risk of becoming socially and educationally excluded. Through implementing the report's recommendations, the intended impact is to increase personal safety of pupils across the education service, reduce social exclusion and increase the attainment levels of this sub-group of the lowest performing 20% of the school population and secure for them a more positive future.

5.4 The intended impact of this report is to ensure equity of service delivery and equality of opportunity by promoting the educational inclusion of those children and young people

who present the most challenging behaviours and have highly significant and enduring barriers to learning.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head of Finance have been consulted. Trade unions and staff have also been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

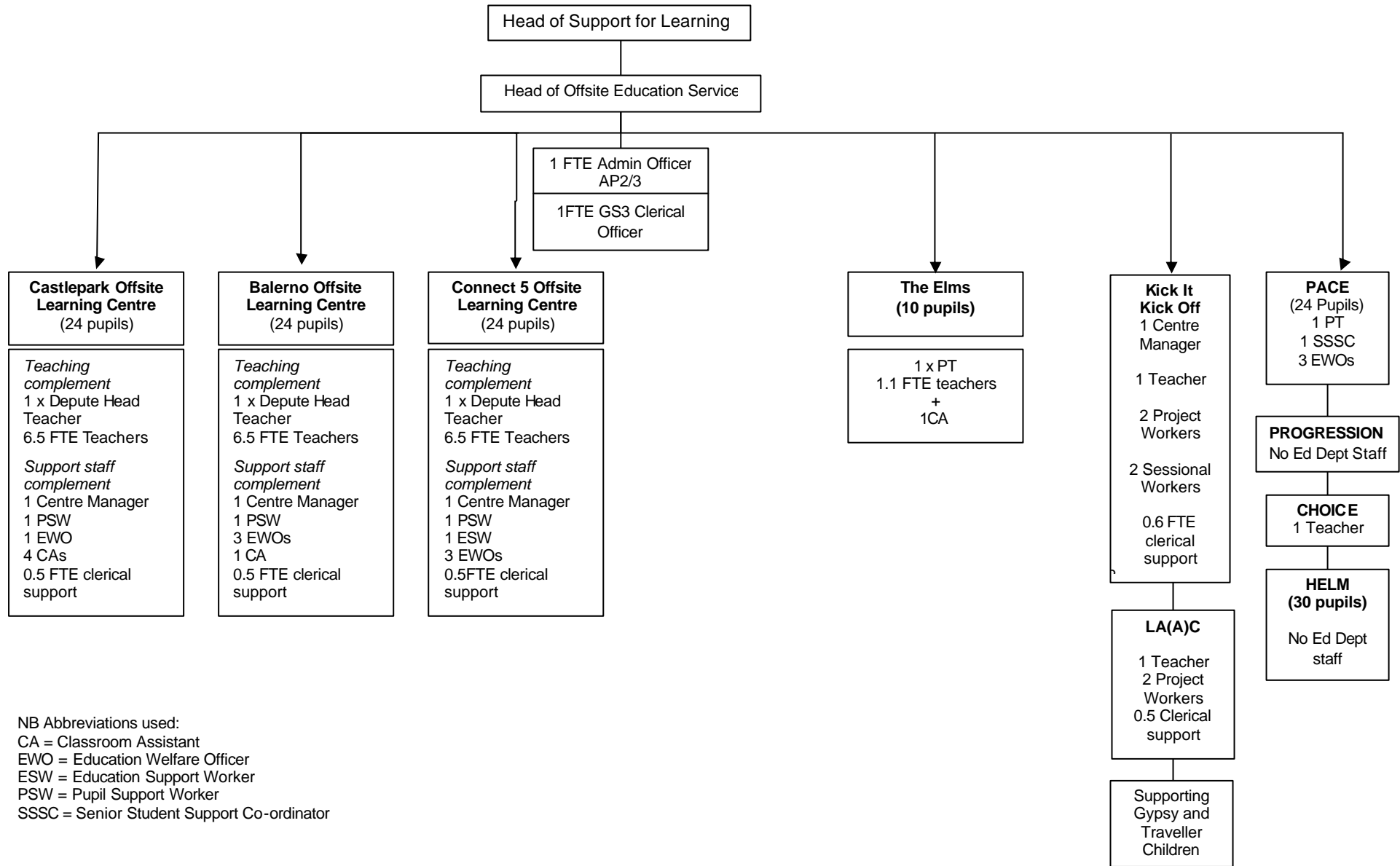
None

Anne Wilson
Director of Education

DATE: 08 October 2007

Jim Petrie
Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

APPENDIX
Overview of Offsite Education Service Structure
2007



NB Abbreviations used:
 CA = Classroom Assistant
 EWO = Education Welfare Officer
 ESW = Education Support Worker
 PSW = Pupil Support Worker
 SSSC = Senior Student Support Co-ordinator