

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 17TH MAY 2004

REPORT ON: APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL SUPPORT WORKERS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 365-2004

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This Report seeks approval for the appointment of non-teaching School Support Workers on a pilot basis to four secondary schools in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Education Committee is recommended to:

- i. note the contents of this report;
- ii. instruct the Director of Education to proceed to appoint School Support Workers as outlined in this report; and
- iii. instruct the Director of Education to monitor and evaluate the success of this initiative, with a view to determining whether such appointments should be made in due course to all secondary schools.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The cost of making these appointments will be met in the first instance from the monies allocated by the Scottish Executive to support the recommendations of its Discipline Task Group, outlined in the report '*Better Behaviour Better Learning*', and thereafter will be incorporated into the Education Department's revenue budget. School Support Workers will be paid at rate GS2 (£12789 - £13416), working term time only. The cost of this pilot initiative will be £65,238 in financial year 2004-05, rising to £105,515 in a full financial year.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 These proposals are designed to ensure that the department makes efficient use of available resources, and meets local needs in providing an effective education service for all.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Implementation of this report will assist the smooth delivery of the education service in secondary schools, and will provide support for all pupils.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 The concern has been highlighted in recent times, both locally and nationally, that all schools should receive as much support as possible to assist them both to deal

with challenging and disruptive behaviour and to undertake tasks that would allow teaching staff to devote time to teaching and learning.

- 6.2 The Education Department's policy on supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties has recently been evaluated and an action plan addressing recommendations is being finalised (report 239-2004 refers). Specific recommendations drew attention to the need to allocate SEBD resources to meet schools' and pupils' needs, and to improve staff-pupil ratios to respond to the pressures now on schools to provide a broad range of pupil support.
- 6.3 The national agreement 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century' stipulated that additional support staff should be appointed to address teacher workload. Reference in particular was made to the need for Classroom Assistants to be appointed to secondary schools, and for the deployment of additional support staff to be determined locally on the basis of local need. It was stated further that all schools should have somebody available to deal with routine emergencies and contact parents during the school day.
- 6.4 Classroom Assistants have already been appointed in the city's primary schools, principally to assist teachers in class with individual pupils and with the management of resources. There is ample evidence, however, both locally and in other Councils, that the chief need of secondary schools is for a resource to assist schools in supporting teachers and pupils around the school and in social and common areas. Experience from other parts of Scotland suggests that the appointment of School Support Workers has been successful and has been approved by Head Teachers and teaching staff.

7.0 PROPOSALS

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Education Department should appoint School Support Workers on a pilot basis to Baldragon Academy, Braeview Academy, Craigie High School and Harris Academy. These schools have been selected to provide a range in terms of size of school and demand posed by challenging pupils.
- 7.2 The remit of School Support Workers will include the supervision of corridors, dining and social areas, and school grounds. They will also be required to undertake investigations of disciplinary incidents in the school and report their findings to senior managers.
- 7.3 This pilot will be of short duration, up to October 2004, so that, if successful, the department can proceed without delay to report back to Education Committee and seek approval for similar appointments in the remaining secondary schools.

8.0 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Depute Chief Executive (Finance). It has also been discussed with both teacher and support staff trade unions.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 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.

ANNE WILSON
Director of Education

4th May 2004

JC/DD