

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
11 JUNE 2008**

SUBJECT: REDUCTION IN PRIMARY 1-3 CLASS SIZE

BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the approach being taken over the next 2 years to address the aim of reducing Primary 1-3 class sizes as expressed in the recently published Concordat between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D1 of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to exercising all the functions of the Council as Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee notes the contents of this report and agrees to receive regular updates on progress.**
- 2.2 **It is recommended that the changes in budget retention within Educational Services be reported to Policy and Resources Committee for approval.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members will be aware that as part of the Concordat referred to in paragraph 1.1 above, Councils have agreed to make "year-on-year progress" in reducing class sizes in Primary 1-3.
- 3.2 Whilst the Scottish Government's stated aim is to reduce P1-3 classes to a maximum of 18, they have not made any legislative provision to enforce this. It has been well documented that this will require significant additional staffing and accommodation. Furthermore, given the teacher training capacity in Scotland, it will take several years to train and appoint the required number of additional teachers to fulfil this ambitious target.
- 3.3 In the meantime however, we will endeavour to make significant progress in Moray over the next 2 years as follows:

As at September 2007 census	-	P1 maximum of 25;
	-	P2 & P3 maximum of 30
As at September 2008 census	-	P1&2 maximum of 25
	-	P3 maximum of 30
As at September 2009 census	-	P1, 2 & 3 maximum of 25

- 3.4 Part of this reduction will be manageable simply due to falling pupil numbers. However, in some schools there will be a requirement for staffing beyond current formula allocation.
- 3.5 In order to facilitate the progress as detailed in Para 3.3 above, it is necessary to retain within Educational Services the budget for teacher staffing which otherwise would have been removed due to falling rolls.
- 3.6 Following the annual pupil census in September 2008 and the annual enrolment process in January 2009, further detailed work will be undertaken with Head Teachers to enable the Primary 3 reduction in all schools for August 2009.
- 3.7 Progress in 2010 and beyond will be the subject of further deliberation and consideration involving Head Teachers, Teacher Trade Unions and relevant officers and regular update reports will be provided to Committee at appropriate intervals.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

The contents of this paper accord with the aims of the various development and improvement plans and, in particular, the Concordat.

(b) Policy and Legal

This paper sets out an intention to reduce class sizes over a period of time in certain stages of the Primary School. However, there are other legal imperatives which would oblige the Council to honour parental choice of school.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

The contents of this paper require the retention of teacher staffing budget which otherwise would be removed due to falling rolls. Reference was made to the financial implications of reducing class sizes in Appendix 4 of the Financial Plan approved by the Council on 14 May 2008. The change in arrangements to not remove budgets as a result of falling rolls requires approval by the Policy and Resources Committee.

(d) Consultations

Senior Officers in Educational Services, Mark Palmer, Chief Financial Officer and Karen Wiles, Principal Solicitor, Litigation and Licensing, have been consulted and are in agreement with the relevant sections of this paper.

5. CONCLUSION

ITEM:

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5.1 That Committee notes the contents of this report and agrees to receive regular updates on progress

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Background Papers:

Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Children and Young People's Services
Committee/11 June 2008/Reduction in P1-3 Class Size