

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON 07 OCTOBER 2009**

**SUBJECT: PROPOSALS FOR A 32 PERIOD WEEK IN MORAY SECONDARY
SCHOOLS**

BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Committee to note the results of the consultation on the proposals for a 32 period week in secondary schools and agree to discussion with secondary headteachers on a coordinated school day.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D(1) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to exercising the functions of the Council as Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) notes the results of the consultation on the proposals for a 32 period week in secondary schools;**
- (ii) agrees to officers discussing with secondary headteachers the move to a coordinated school day;**
- (iii) agrees to a report on the topic being brought to Committee for a decision.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following consultations with secondary headteachers and informal discussions and briefings with different groups, including Elected Members, a consultation exercise was held round proposals for a uniform 32 period week across our secondary schools. The consultation period finished on 07 July 2009.
- 3.2 The proposals for a uniform 32 period week were seen as having the potential to deliver a number of advantages for our secondary schools although, as with any development, potential drawbacks were also identified. An outline of these is given in **APPENDIX 1**. An overview of the consultation results, including the responses from individual secondary schools, is given as **APPENDIX 2** to this paper. The overall primary school and secondary school results were also converted to percentages and split into three categories (strongly agree/agree; disagree/strongly disagree; don't know/no response given. These percentages were then averaged which gives equal weighting to all groups making a return. This information is given in **APPENDIX 3**.
- 3.3 Analysis of Results – Secondary Schools.

- 3.3.1 In some cases the numbers responding were small which affects the interpretation of the results.
- 3.3.2 Proposal 1 (We should move to all our secondary schools having 32 periods of 50 minutes plus registration of 10 minutes per day.) This proposal is very narrowly supported with 43.63% agreeing and 41.68% disagreeing. 14.68% either recorded 'don't know' or did not register an opinion. Of the groups involved, support staff, parents, Parent Councils and children and young people are in favour with teaching staff and Pupil Councils against. When those indicating 'don't know' or leaving the question blank are included then only a minority of the responses from the Parent Council and children and young people support the proposal. **APPENDIX 3** shows that giving the returns equal weighting narrows the gap between those in favour and those against and increases the percentage of returns in the don't know/no response given, category. For the teaching staff responses, two of our schools are in favour of the proposal and six against with two heavily against.
- 3.3.3 Proposal 2 (We should move to all our secondary schools having the same structure for their school day with the same starting and finishing times.) This proposal is supported by 57.61% of those who responded with 25.66% against. All groups support the proposal except Pupil Councils. Parental support is particularly strong in favour of this proposal.
- 3.3.4 Proposal 3 (We should move to a model of two longer days – Monday and Tuesday – and three shorter days – Wednesday, Thursday and Friday – in our secondary schools.) This proposal found favour in the feedback with 46.76% agreeing and 38.83% disagreeing. However, 14.41% either voted 'don't know' or did not give a score. In fact the percentage in favour was largely influenced by the returns from children and young people as this group plus support staff supported the proposal (narrowly in the case of support staff) **APPENDIX 3** shows that, when the returns are given equal weighting, support for this proposal declines considerably. Teaching staff, parents, Parent Councils and Pupil Councils are all against the proposal.
- 3.3.5 Overall, the secondary school feedback shows strong support for proposal 2 with less support across the groups for proposal 1 and most groups against proposal 3.
- 3.4 Analysis of Results – Primary Schools
- 3.4.1 Twenty eight out of forty six primary schools responded to the consultation.
- 3.4.2 Proposal 1 (We should move to all our secondary schools having 32 periods of 50 minutes plus registration of 10 minutes per day.) This proposal is supported with 49.11% in favour and 24.05% against. All groups are in favour. When the percentage of 'don't know' and 'no score given' are included, then it is only for parental and Pupil Council responses that the positive responses remain in the majority. **APPENDIX 3** shows that an equal weighting leads to 34.5% appearing in the don't know/no response given category.

- 3.4.3 Proposal 2 (We should move to all our secondary schools having the same structure for their school day with the same starting and finishing times.) This proposal is heavily supported with 69.31% in favour and only 17.44% against. All groups voted for the proposals with most heavily in favour.
- 3.4.4 Proposal 3 (We should move to a model of two longer days – Monday and Tuesday – and three shorter days – Wednesday, Thursday and Friday – in our secondary schools.) This proposal is narrowly supported with 47.54% in favour and 40.29% against. However, all groups except the children and young people are against the proposals and **APPENDIX 3** shows that an equal weighting to the returns gives a very different view with 30.47% in favour and 56.27% against.
- 3.4.5 Overall, the primary school feedback shows very strong support for proposal 2, support for proposal 1 and most groups opposed to proposal 3.

3.5 Analysis of Results – Other Responses.

- 3.5.1 A small number of responses were received from other groups. The results do not show support for proposals 1 or 3 but do give support for proposal 2. Responses in favour of proposal 2 are from Moray College, the Libraries and Museums Service and Music Instructors.
- 3.5.2 A small number of responses did not identify the group or individual making the response. These returns show support for proposals 1 and 2 and a lack of support for proposal 3.

3.6 Analysis of Results – Comments Received.

A large number of comments were received. These are varied and, although many are positive, the bulk raises issues or concerns. The main areas covered are as follows:

- Problems with childcare.
 - The proposals do not support Curriculum for Excellence which looks for local solutions.
 - Transport difficulties anticipated.
 - Schools do need to work together.
 - The longer days on Monday and Tuesday are seen as an issue.
 - The arguments in favour of the change are not strong enough to merit change.
 - What we have now works fine.
 - Children need routine and so different day lengths would not be good.
 - Have different 'long' days – not Monday and Tuesday.
 - Consistency across our schools would be a good idea.
 - What would be the impact on primary schools?
- 3.7 Overall, there is no doubt that proposal 2 has found favour in this consultation. The global responses and virtually all individual groups are in favour. Equally, almost all groups are against proposal 3. Proposal 1 gains a mixed response although, overall, the proposal finds support. One or two of the comments

would favour a four and a half day model although there is no indication that this would find greater favour than proposal 3. Equally, other comments would favour the long days being other than Monday and Tuesday. Again these are 'individual' comments rather than a ground swell of opinion. Therefore, it would not seem that proposal 1 can move forward given the overall negative feedback on proposal 3.

- 3.8 Given the feedback it is clearly worth pursuing proposal 2 with headteachers to explore the coordination of the secondary school day but without a move to 32 periods. This would entail coordination round a more traditional school day structure, of perhaps 30 periods per week.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

This report relates to Key priority 5 (Attainment and Achievement – Children and Young People) in the Single Outcome Agreement. It links to Action Area 11 (Curriculum for Excellence) in the Service Improvement Plan of Educational Services

(b) Policy and Legal

N/A.

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

N/A

(d) Consultations

Members of the Senior Management Team in Educational Services and secondary headteachers have been consulted and agree with the contents of this report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) **notes the results of the consultation on the proposals for a 32 period week in secondary schools;**

- (ii) agrees to officers discussing with secondary headteachers the move to a coordinated school day;**
- (iii) agrees to a report on the topic being brought to Committee for a decision.**

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Background Papers:
Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Children and Young People's Services Committee/7 October 2009/Proposals for a 32 Period Week in Moray Secondary Schools