

## DEVELOPING A NEW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS APPROACH IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

### 1. Reason for Report

To advise Members of the response of the Scottish Executive to the proposals for adopting a New Community Schools approach across all schools in Dumfries and Galloway.

### 2. Background

2.1 In February 2002 Members received a report indicating that Scottish Executive funding was to be made available for developing a New Community Schools approach across all schools. The allocation for Dumfries and Galloway Council was **£338,960** for **2002/03** and **£338,960** for **2003/04**.

2.2 As indicated in the February Committee report, a letter had been sent to SEED advising that it would be the intention of Dumfries and Galloway to submit only a general plan in respect of NCS extension at this stage and seeking a later submission date for detailed proposals. This was to ensure:

- a parallel development of the proposals for both Changing Children's Services and New Community Schools and thus ensure greater coherence and consistency;
- there was time for adequate consultation with all those who required to be involved.

2.3 These broad proposals were accepted and more detailed plans were submitted at the end of March.

### 3. Proposal for Developing a New Community Schools Approach

3.1 A 'vision paper' was drawn up by a multi-agency working group, outlining the New Community Schools approach and the underpinning principles / commitments of that approach which had been highlighted in the February Committee report.

3.2 Work was done to ensure that the NCS proposals were properly integrated with the proposals for the Changing Children's Services Fund.

3.3 The multi-agency working group also supported the development of an evaluation tool, which would be used by schools to audit current provision and approaches against the NCS principles/commitments.

3.4 These together with an Action Plan were submitted to SEED in March. The Action Plan was in draft form to allow for a more detailed Plan to be drawn up once schools complete the audit process.

3.5 Further, financial support for the development of a New Community Schools approach using existing resources was identified and details of this were also sent to SEED.

3.6 These four documents can be made available to Members on request.

#### 4. Response of the Scottish Executive

4.1 Whilst the Scottish Executive is still discussing the submissions of 16 Authorities, the response to the Dumfries and Galloway submission has been favourable and the funding allocation referred to in 2.1 has been confirmed.

#### 5. Progress to Date with Developing a New Community Schools Approach

5.1 At headteacher seminars held in the summer term, presentations were given about NCS and the approach being taken. A short video is being produced to assist headteachers in disseminating the information to all staff (teaching and non-teaching) in schools.

5.2 Discussions have been held with schools about the evaluation tool and how best the audit process might be taken forward.

5.3 Schools are being asked, on completion of the audit process, to focus on one or two priorities for action and these should then feed into next year's phase of the development planning process.

5.4 The concept of NCS is consistent with the objectives of a number of other current Education initiatives such as those funded under the National Priorities Action Fund. Work is on-going to identify monies which may be available from these budget headings to support the development of an NCS approach across the Authority and ensure that all these initiatives move forward on a coherent and consistent basis.

#### 6. Recommendations

**Members are asked to:**

**6.1 Note the positive response of the Scottish Executive to the proposal for adopting a New Community Schools approach across all schools in Dumfries and Galloway; and**

**6.2 Request further reports as appropriate.**

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#### **Background Papers:**

Scottish Executive Education Department: New Community School Prospectus 1998  
New Community School: Education Committee Report dated 15 December 1998  
New Community Schools: Education Committee Report dated 8 April 1999  
New Community Schools: Education Committee report dated 23 August 2000  
New Community Schools: Education Committee Report dated 5 February 2001  
Better Behaviour - Better Learning – Report of Discipline Task Group June 2001  
SEED: For Scotland's Children – Better integrated children's services October 2001  
Dumfries and Galloway's Children's Services Plan 2001 -2004