

Item: 19

Policy and Resources Committee: 22 June 2021.

Primary Education Provision – Flotta Primary School.

Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider budgetary requirements to support the partial re-opening of Flotta school.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That, on 9 June 2021, when considering the developing situation regarding the requirement for primary education on Flotta, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee recommended:

- That Flotta Primary School be partially reopened as a satellite classroom of Orphir Primary School, commencing in school year 2021/22.
- That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the Policy and Resources Committee, requesting that the estimated budget shortfall to support the partial re-opening of Flotta Primary School, be funded as follows:
 - Financial year 2021/22 – up to £110,000 to be met through a one-off contribution from the General Fund Contingency.
 - Financial year 2022/23 onwards – an unavoidable service pressure to be considered as part of the budget setting process.

It is recommended:

2.2.

That the estimated budget shortfall to support the partial reopening of Flotta Primary School, be funded as follows:

- Financial year 2021/22 – up to £110,000 to be met through a one-off contribution from the General Fund Contingency.
- Financial year 2022/23 onwards, that an unavoidable service pressure be considered as part of the budget setting process.

3. Background

3.1.

Due to a decline in the school roll to zero, Flotta Primary School was mothballed in 2010. As a consequence of this staff were redeployed to other roles in the service and IT resources were deployed elsewhere.

3.2.

At its meeting held on 11 September 2013, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee noted:

- That informal enquiries regarding school provision on Flotta had been received from two families.
- That Flotta Community Council had requested that consideration be given to clarifying the status of the school on Flotta.
- The current commitment in relation to making educational provision for pupils, as outlined in sections 4 and 5 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.
- The options for future arrangements in relation to making educational provision for pupils living on Flotta, as outlined in section 6 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, with the preferred option being option 4 for less than 3 children and option 3 for 4 children.

3.3.

The Committee recommended:

- That, in the event that children living on Flotta required education provision and subject to securing financial resources, the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should, as an interim measure, establish a supported home-schooling service for less than 4 children in one family and consider partially re-opening the school as a remote classroom for 4 or more children or more than one family.
- That, should education provision require to be established on Flotta, the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should review the interim provision referred to above, bearing in mind the individual circumstances of the children concerned.

4. Budgetary Requirement

4.1.

Since the arrival of a new family in Flotta in May 2021, the minimum threshold for the number of Flotta families seeking the partial re-opening of the school has been met.

4.2.

To support the process of consideration, the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing provided an options appraisal to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee on 9 June 2021.

4.3.

Having reviewed options, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee recommended that Flotta Primary School be partially reopened as a satellite classroom of Orphir Primary School, commencing in school year 2021/22.

4.4.

It should be noted that pursuance of this recommendation will require a job sizing exercise to take place for the Headteacher of Orphir/Stenness, and for the following temporary posts to be established at Flotta Primary School:

- 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) post of Principal Teacher.
- 0.29 FTE post of Clerical Assistant (G3).
- 0.27 FTE post of Auxiliary (G2).
- 0.2 FTE post of Expressive Arts provision.
- 0.17 FTE post of Cleaner (G1).
- 0.17 FTE post of Janitor (G1).

4.5.

The Education, Leisure and Housing Committee also recommended that the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report to the Policy and Resources Committee in order to secure the necessary funding to progress a partial re-opening of Flotta school.

5. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council complying with its financial processes and procedures and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

6. Financial Implications

6.1.

At its meeting of 9 June 2021, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee acknowledged that there will be an unavoidable spending pressure arising from the policy position being triggered to provide an education service on Flotta. It was noted that the cost of achieving the recommended partial re-opening of Flotta school as a satellite of Orphir School, is £110,000 and that there is no current budget for this.

6.2.

As this budget issue for the partial reopening of Flotta Primary School has arisen shortly after the Council's budget has been set for financial year 2021/22, a temporary budget provision will be required to cover the current financial year. The ongoing budget requirement can thereafter be considered as part of the budget setting exercise for 2022/23.

6.3.

The temporary budget of £110,000 could be sourced from the General Fund Contingency in 2021/22, which was established at £1,814,000.

7. Legal Aspects

Section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. As part of this, the Council is expected to have regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

8. Contact Officers

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