

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 27 MAY 2003

### SCIENCE STRATEGY

#### Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval for an outline strategy to support the development of science education in schools.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In January and May of 2002 the Authority received additional money to support the development of science education in schools from the Scottish Executive. Members will recall that this money was to be spent in accordance with the guidelines that were set nationally.
- 2.2 It is the case that there continues to be much attention on Science education. Alongside literacy and numeracy, competence in science is seen as being of key relevance to young people in gaining qualifications for work. The association of science skills with activities such as health, medicine, engineering, technology (including biotechnology), transport, aerospace, agriculture, the environment, power, and the petrochemicals industry places science at the heart of economic regeneration. This is true whether considered locally, nationally or internationally. It therefore follows that the promotion of science education should be seen as a key priority for the education service.
- 2.3 Members will also recall that as part of a measured and phased programme of developments in support of subject areas within the curriculum, East Ayrshire has given appropriate emphasis to the Arts, Modern Languages (including Gaelic), and Sports and PE. Additionally, literacy and numeracy has been advanced through the successful work in Early Intervention and its successor project. It is appropriate therefore to consider how science education will be further advanced.

#### 3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Scottish Executive has released a further amount of money that can be used to support science education. From a national allocation of £5M, East Ayrshire's share is £121,900. The national guidelines indicate that 60% of this should be spent on updating science equipment with the remaining 40% spent on staff development.
- 3.2 Given the importance of this area it is the intention to develop a detailed and comprehensive science strategy. This will be done in consultation with schools, and work is already underway. The results of this work will be presented to Committee in due course.

**3.3** It is proposed to distribute the finance available under this allocation in a way which is consistent with the Authority's approach to delegated resources. In outline, it is proposed at this stage to use the available funds in the following ways.

Updating of equipment:	£73,140
CPD including production of a Science Strategy	£28,760
Production of a web-based learning resource	£20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£121,900</b>

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION**

**4.1** Funds for updating of equipment will be delegated directly to schools on the basis of school rolls. 60% of Continuing Professional Development funds will be delegated directly to schools with the remainder being allocated to develop support for science education in the form of co-ordinated support for principal teachers, development of materials to assist senior staff in the management of science education, and further enhancement of 5-14 materials. The remaining £20, 000 will be used to facilitate web-based learning in science through a supported study package for young people.

#### **5. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** Nil

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** The costs associated with this initiative will be met by an allocation of funds from the Scottish Executive.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) approve this approach to the further development of support to science education; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report

John Mulgrew  
Director of Educational and Social Services

GRS/GRS  
13 May 2003

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools, (01563-576089).

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

**Implementation Officer: Graham Short**