

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 27 MAY 2003

THE SCHOOLS ESTATE STRATEGY

Report by Director of Educational & Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Education Committee of the resources allocated to East Ayrshire Council for improvements to the school estate and the development of an estate management plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scottish Executive and CoSLA published a joint strategy on the school estate “Building our Future – Scotland’s School Estate” on 3 February 2003. The Scottish Executive issued circular 3/2003 “The School Fund” on 31 March 2003 detailing capital grants to local authorities under the Grants for School Improvements (Scotland) Regulations 1997. In addition correspondence titled “Support for School Estate Management Plan Preparation” was issued on 30 April 2003 and allocates revenue funding for the preparation of an estate management plan.
- 2.2 Under the heading School Fund for 2003/04 resources of £36.7 million have been distributed nationally, with East Ayrshire Council’s allocation amounting to £898,000. In financial years 2004/05 and 2005/06 this sum will increase to £1,877,000.
- 2.3 For the School Estate Management Plan Preparation the Scottish Executive have released national funding of £5,000,000, with East Ayrshire receiving £84,500.

3. THE SCHOOL FUND

- 3.1 The £898,000 allocated under this scheme are to be considered as additional to the Council’s section 94 capital consent and should be used to make improvements to the school estate, in line with local priorities.
- 3.2 Circular 3/2003 makes it clear that each authority should determine its own priorities for spending and accordingly Appendix 1 highlights the proposed spending details for 2003/04.
- 3.3 Two main headings of boiler replacements and major maintenance are proposed. The allocation of resources under these headings will allow the Council to meet priorities highlighted by Head Teachers and HMIE.
- 3.4 Under the heading of major maintenance window replacement programmes and fabric upgrades to the buildings can be implemented. All work will be undertaken with the consultation of Head Teachers and school boards.

4. SCHOOL ESTATE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 4.1** Correspondence from the Scottish Executive has identified that a major element of achieving well designed, built and managed schools is the need for local authorities to produce a school estate management plan by 31 December 2003. The Scottish Executive has confirmed its intention to work in partnership with authorities and will issue guidance on the preparation of an estate management plan in the coming months.
- 4.2** The revenue funding of £84,500 can be used for staffing and other general costs which are associated with the development of an estate management plan. It is therefore proposed to supplement the existing departmental property team with a post of Property Officer. This would be a secondment within the Council for initially two years, at the grade of SO8. Although the initial plan must be submitted by 31 December 2003, there will be an on-going need to maintain an effective database and develop information systems which will supplement the decision making processes when prioritising resources.
- 4.3** There is a wealth of internal experience which can be utilised to create the estate management plan. The Property Development Manager will manage the new post and continue to liaise with establishment Heads and Principal Officers to improve the standards of existing buildings.
- 4.4** Other costs will be incurred in the development of an appropriate software package and administrative costs.

5. FINANCIAL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The costs of school Fund projects and the estate management development will be met in full by the Scottish Executive.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** It is recommended that Members of Education Committee:
- (i) note the allocations of £898,000 for the School Fund and £84,500 for the Preparation of the School Estate Management Plan for financial year 2003/04;
 - (ii) agree to the allocation of the School Fund as detailed in Appendix 1;
 - (iii) agree to the referral of a temporary secondment to Corporate Governance Committee; and
 - (iv) otherwise note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational & Social Services

EC/JW
8 May 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. "Building Our Future – Scotland's School Estate" – Scottish Executive/CoSLA
2. Scottish Executive Circular 3/2003 – "The School Fund"
3. Scottish Executive Correspondence – "Support for School Estate Management Plan Preparation"

Members wishing further information should contact Euan Couperwhite, Head of Resource Support, Tel: (01563) 576090.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: EUAN COUPERWHITE