

## NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

## REPORT

To: Education Committee	Subject: NEW POLICY ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
From: Director of Education	
Date: 5th November 1998	
Ref: JMcG/LL	

## PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report advises committee of the proposal to produce a North Lanarkshire policy on Special Educational needs subsequent to a comprehensive review of the current framework and context for service delivery in this area.

## RECOMMENDATION

The education committee is asked:

- (i) to note and approve the contents of the report.
- (ii) to refer the matter to the social work committee for information.
- (iii) to request the director of education to report back to committee on the outcomes of the review process.

Members wishing further information should contact either:

Michael O'Neill, Director of Education on 01236 812307 or  
 Jim McGuinness, Head of Support for Learning on 01236 812280.

*Michael O'Neill*

## NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL : DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## New Policy on Special Educational Needs

## Report by Director

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. In April 1996 the Strathclyde Regional Policy on special educational needs, "Every Child is Special", was adopted as the policy of the Council in relation to children with special educational needs. The original policy was informed by the Warnock Report (1978) on special educational needs and Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) which emphasised that all rights apply to all children, without exception.
- 1.2. Among the key principles of the policy at the time of its adoption were:
  - positive discrimination
  - individual need
  - the provision of the least restrictive environment
  - a continuum of provision
  - special schools and units of quality
- 1.3. Since April 1996 the national and local context for the delivery of services to children and young people with special educational needs has changed significantly due to a number of legislative and policy developments.
  - SOEID Circular 4/96 "Children and Young Persons with Special Educational Needs: Assessment and Recording", which set out both the legislative and procedural framework with regard to recording as well as good practice issues.
  - The Children (Scotland) Act 1995, which placed an emphasis on the provision and delivery of a co-ordinated range of services, particularly education, health and social work, to children with special needs and their families.
  - The SOEID Discussion Paper on Special Education Needs (1998), which highlighted current issues and invited responses from interested parties.

- 1.4. In the period since 1996, the education department has, with committee approval, undertaken a number of developments which have expanded and improved the provision available for pupils with special educational needs:
- 2 new secondary schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have been opened.
  - 2 special schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties have been relocated within mainstream school campuses.
  - 1 new unit in a primary school has been created for pupils with phonological difficulties.
  - 2 new units in nursery establishments have been created for early years pupils with communication difficulties and hearing impairments respectively.
  - Substantial additional funds have been directed towards increased provision of speech and language therapy for pupils with special needs.
- 1.5. As a result of both the provision inherited at disaggregation and that additionally created since then North Lanarkshire can offer a range of provision of real quality, depth and breadth to its special needs youngsters and their parents.
- 1.6. Nevertheless, legislative and national policy developments suggest that this is an appropriate time for North Lanarkshire to produce a policy for special educational needs which is specific to its own circumstances and needs, reflective of current national thinking and legislation, informed by current good practice and in tune with wider council policy.

## 2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1. Against the background set out above it is proposed that a review of existing policy on special educational needs be undertaken in consultation with schools, young people and their parents and other relevant agencies, including health and social work.
- 2.2. It is also proposed that a radical review of current special needs provision and structure be undertaken as part of the review process.
- 2.3. It is anticipated that this process would be completed by late summer 1999, with a subsequent report being placed before committee which would enable an approved policy to be established in time for the Millennium.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1. The education committee is asked:

- (i) to note and approve the contents of the report.
- (ii) to refer the matter to the social work committee for information.
- (iii) to request the director of education to report back to committee the outcomes of the review process.

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