EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

17th Meeting, 2000 (Session 1)

Monday 15 May 2000

The Committee will meet at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 2, Committee Chambers.

1. **Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Bill:** The Committee will consider the Bill at Stage 2 (Day 5).

2. **Update on Committee Business:** The Committee will be updated on business in its current work programme.

3. **Appointment of Adviser:** The Committee will consider the appointment of an adviser for the Schools Infrastructure Inquiry.

Gillian Baxendine
Clerk to the Committee
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The following private paper is attached for this meeting—

Note by the Clerk on appointment of adviser (Agenda item 3).

The following paper is issued for information—

Executive response (Petition 72: Closure of Boharm School)
PETITION PE 72: CLOSURE OF BOHARM SCHOOL

I refer to your letter of 22 February 2000 concerning the above Petition.

You conveyed the Education, Culture and Sport Committee’s request that the Minister considers carefully the points raised in the Petition in reaching his decision on the proposed closure of Boharm Primary School, and for a report back in due course which the Committee could consider at a future meeting.

Ministers have now reached a decision on this proposal and I enclose a copy of the letter which has been issued today conveying the consent of the Scottish Ministers to the closure of the school. That sets out the issues which Ministers have noted particularly in reaching their decision.

MISS J MACDOUGALL
Private Secretary
Dear Sir

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF BOHARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

I refer to your application dated 14 January 2000 for the consent of the Scottish Ministers to the closure of Boharm Primary School and the transfer of the pupils to Keith Primary School. The application for consent was required in terms of regulation 9 of, and paragraph (a)(i) of Schedule 2 to, the Education (Publication and Consultation Etc)(Scotland) Regulations 1981 because the distance between the two schools is greater than 8.046720 kilometres (5 miles).

The Scottish Ministers have given careful consideration to the application; to representations received by the Council during the statutory consultation carried out by the Council in relation to the proposal during October and November 1999; and to representations received directly by them from various sources including Members of the Scottish Parliament. They have also taken account of advice provided by HM Inspectors of Schools.

In reaching their decision, the Scottish Ministers have noted particularly that:

- Boharm Primary School has significant over-capacity, which will remain the case even in the light of the revised roll projections which were made during the consultation period, and in the light of estimates of the number of new pupils likely to arise from possible new housing in the current delineated area;

- Keith Primary School has more than sufficient capacity to absorb pupils from the current delineated area of Boharm Primary School;

- some pupils already travel from the Boharm area to school in Keith and that the Council and the police are satisfied as to the safety of the arrangements for picking up and dropping off the increased number of pupils at the drop-off point at Mulben;
• the community use of Boharm Primary School has been limited and that there is a public hall in the area for use for community purposes;

• financial savings from the proposed closure will be reinvested in the education service in Moray;

The Scottish Ministers have also taken particular account of the educational considerations relating to the proposed closure in the light of advice from HM Inspectorate of Schools following visits to both schools. Overall, Ministers take the view that there will be no detriment to the education of the pupils transferring from Boharm and that there are potential benefits arising from the broader curriculum available at Keith and from the greater interaction there with a larger peer group.

After careful consideration of the educational, financial and community aspects of this proposal, the Scottish Ministers are satisfied that there are no reasonable grounds for them to reject the decision taken by The Moray Council to close Boharm Primary School. I am, therefore, able to confirm that they consent to the proposal under section 22B of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

Yours faithfully

G A STUART