

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	<b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>
DATE	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011</b>
DIRECTOR	<b>Annette Bruton</b>
TITLE OF REPORT	<b>Celebrating St Andrews Day 2011 in Schools</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/11/045</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek the approval of the Education, Culture & Sport Committee for schools to remain open to pupils on St Andrew's Day, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011, allowing them to celebrate the occasion in school.

In the previous two years, St Andrew's Day has been designated a school in-service day, which meant that pupils have had a holiday to celebrate the occasion. This was in response to a request by the Cabinet Secretary to consider making St Andrew's Day a school holiday.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

To give approval to the change in approach to celebrating St Andrew's Day, by allowing pupils to celebrate the day in school, rather than using the day as a school in-service day.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

The dates of in-service days have an impact on parents and employers, so it will be important for them to be notified of the agreed dates for 2011/2012 as soon as possible. An early decision would therefore be welcomed.

### **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

In January 2009 a letter was received from the Cabinet Secretary, encouraging us to consider marking St Andrew's Day 2009 by making it a school holiday.

This was subsequently discussed by the Policy and Strategy Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009, where it was agreed that, rather than making the day

a holiday for both staff and pupils, it would instead be made a school in-service day, which would allow pupils a holiday in order to celebrate the occasion.

This approach was continued in 2010, when 30<sup>th</sup> November was also a school in-service day.

The Committee is requested to consider making 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011 a normal school day for pupils. This would allow teachers an opportunity to focus on the occasion of St Andrew's Day and use it as an opportunity to teach pupils about this important aspect of Scottish culture.

In considering this proposal the Committee is reminded of the principles adopted when producing the current holiday arrangements, namely:

1. There is a need to establish a holiday pattern that avoids schools opening during public and local holidays.
2. Whole weeks of holiday and school term time are preferable to incomplete weeks
3. There are benefits for some children, parents and employees in harmonisation of holiday patterns with neighbouring Authorities e.g. Aberdeenshire
4. Harmonisation requires full and early consultation with neighbouring Authorities
5. In any school year, the stipulated number of attendances for pupils is 190 days and the number of working days for teachers is 195 days, the additional 5 days for teachers being in-service days.

In 2011, the 30<sup>th</sup> November falls on a Wednesday. If the day was to be made an in-service day, we would require pupils to be at school on the Monday and Tuesday of that week, then to take a holiday on the Wednesday, and to return to school for the Thursday and Friday.

Traditionally we have ensured that in-service days fall immediately before or after a weekend or other school holiday, to minimise any disruption to the school week.

Aberdeenshire did not make St Andrew's Day a holiday for pupils or staff in 2009 or in 2010. They have already set their dates for holidays and in-service days up until the end of school session 2013/2014, and have no plans to make 30<sup>th</sup> November in the coming years a holiday or an in-service day.

The proposed in-service days for Aberdeen City in 2011/2012, should the committee approve this proposal, are as follows:

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2011 (*First day of term*)  
Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011\*  
Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2012 (*Monday 13<sup>th</sup> is the mid-term holiday*)  
Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2012

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (*Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May is May Day holiday*)

The proposed dates have been set to ensure that three of the days coincide with Aberdeenshire's in-service days (14<sup>th</sup> November, 14<sup>th</sup> February and 15<sup>th</sup> February). This would allow opportunities for teachers from both local authorities to benefit from joint-working and shared input into their professional development on some or all of these days.

\*If the committee decides that St Andrew's Day should remain an in-service day, the November in-service day would be the 30<sup>th</sup> and not the 14<sup>th</sup> November, and only two of the days would coincide with Aberdeenshire's days.

## **6. IMPACT**

We require to advise parents and families as soon as possible of the dates of the in-service days for 2011/2012 so that they can make their plans accordingly.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Aberdeen City School Terms and Holiday Dates 2010 – 2015

[http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/SchoolsColleges/scc\\_SchoolHols.asp](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/SchoolsColleges/scc_SchoolHols.asp)

Aberdeenshire School Terms, Holiday and In-Service Day Dates 2009-2014

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/Schoolholidayplanner.pdf>

## **8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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