

Circular 2/70
(2nd February 1970)

To Local Education Authorities

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE, CURZON STREET, LONDON, W.1.

All communications should be addressed to the PERMANENT UNDER-
SECRETARY OF STATE

THE CHANCE TO SHARE

Co-operation in the Provision of Facilities for Educational Establishments and the Community

Introduction

1. Six years ago, Circular No 11/64 'Provision of Facilities for Sport' drew attention to the possibility of obtaining better value for money by combining educational with other local authority or voluntary resources to provide sports facilities for use not only by pupils and students but also by the general public. During the period since then increasing interest has been shown in dual provision for sport and physical recreation and also as a principle which can be applied to other facilities needed by both educational establishments and the community. Some of the possibilities are described in Appendix A to this Circular.

2. The Secretary of State, after consulting the Minister of Housing and Local Government, is satisfied that there is considerable scope for the wider application of this principle, particularly at a time of restriction of public expenditure on local authority services, so that available resources are used to the maximum advantage. He accordingly requests all local education authorities to review their arrangements for consultation and co-operation with other local authorities or with other departments within the same authority, and also with the bodies concerned with community facilities. This will ensure that every possible opportunity for dual provision is fully exploited. The following paragraphs deal with the long-term and short-term aspects of this policy.

Long-term planning

3. The full benefits of dual provision are most likely to be obtained where the various community needs, including those of schools and other educational establishments, are studied together and the necessary facilities defined in a unified planning scheme for area development. While the main responsibility for the application of a long-term policy for dual provision rests with local planning authorities, it is important that local education authorities should be responsive to proposals of this kind. If it is possible for those concerned to reach agreement on a statement of the general principles for co-ordination which should govern the commitment of resources to dual provision schemes, there will then be a basis for their more precise definition and implementation as the opportunity presents itself.

Short-term possibilities

4. Apart from the long-term planning considerations, the Secretary of State is anxious that the principles of dual provision should be applied so far as possible to existing educational establishments and to educational building projects likely to be started within a few years. Some suggestions of what might be done in various circumstances are offered in Appendix A. In the case of educational projects on which detailed design work has already started, decisions on dual provision must of course take into account the risk of delays to completion if too much is attempted at too late a stage. Network techniques for project planning and control may be useful in assessing how much can be done without jeopardising completion dates. Furthermore, the earlier notice of educational projects given under the revised programming arrangements described in Circular 13/68 should, when fully operative, facilitate the orderly planning of dual provision schemes.

5. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government give special consideration to local authority dual provision schemes. Resources for all local authority recreation projects are limited however and the consideration of an application for loan sanction must depend on the case for more public recreational facilities in the area and also on the level of other demands. Further, loan sanction must be given so as to coincide with the allocation of capital for the school building

project by this Department and it is therefore essential for both government departments to be given warning at the earliest possible moment of what is proposed. More detailed guidance on procedure is given in Appendix B to this Circular.

6. Successful dual provision also involves quite complex local negotiation and the prospective partners to a scheme need to know clearly what their respective commitments, in terms of capital and running costs, are likely to be. Discussion of a dual scheme ought therefore to begin well before the school building project is programmed to start (ie at or before the time the project is included in a Preliminary List), so that management questions can be resolved, the experience of government departments and other local authorities drawn upon, and a clear brief given to the architect to design the buildings from the outset for their dual purpose. In the short-term this will usually mean that the initiative will come from a local education authority, since other authorities are not usually in a position to know what school building may be envisaged for the future. It should be borne in mind that regional sports councils are well placed to offer guidance on the needs for sport and recreational facilities in their areas.

Conclusion

7. The Architects and Building Branch of the Department is available to give whatever guidance it can to local education authorities that have in mind a dual provision project. It is hoped that they will make their problems known at as early a stage as possible.

8. The concept of dual provision is still, comparatively, in its infancy. The Secretary of State will welcome any comments which authorities may wish to make on the subject of this Circular.

Herbert Andrew.

(Herbert Andrew)

Appendix A

THE SCOPE FOR DUAL PROVISION

1. The principle of dual provision has increasingly found acceptance and a number of interesting schemes have been put forward. It is intended to publish detailed descriptions of some of these in the near future. At present, the great majority of such schemes are based on secondary schools and most involve sports facilities. Whilst very many schemes are likely to be of this character, the principle is capable of extension more widely to other types of establishment and to other needs. As requested in paragraph 2 of the Circular, local education authorities should, in considering future building requirements, explore thoroughly with the local authorities and voluntary bodies concerned the contribution which each project might make to the recreational amenities of the area. Local voluntary activities and the use made of existing school premises by the public will be useful guides to the type of amenity likely to be attractive. For instance, an area with active musical or dramatic societies might make good use of the basic accommodation for these subjects usually provided in a secondary school if more audience or workshops space could be made available than is possible within the school cost limits. In most areas, minority interests in sports such as weight-training, judo, and certain athletic field events could be catered for economically by minor additions or modifications to school facilities.

2. The range of possibilities and the scale on which dual provision could be planned are very wide. Where the educational premises already exist, development for community purposes will be dependent on such factors as convenience of access to the public and the size and nature of the site and buildings. Similarly, where new premises are already at an advanced stage of design or are under construction, it will be too late to make substantial changes of location or modifications to the building plans. In such circumstances, only minor additions may be possible, but their value to a community may well be out of proportion to their low cost. Examples are:

- i. a floodlit hard porous pitch, or floodlighting to enable an existing pitch or paved area laid out for games to be used in the evenings;

- ii. extra changing or social accommodation for an existing sports hall, gymnasium or swimming pool (if otherwise suitable for public use);
- iii. extra storage space to make a hall or other large area more adaptable for community purposes;
- iv. one or more squash courts;
- v. a small multi-purpose ancillary hall;
- vi. social and refreshment facilities.

3. The more ambitious schemes for dual provision will usually be associated with areas of new housing or urban renewal, especially where choice can still be exercised in such matters as sites and building design and where competing recreational facilities do not exist. In such localities, where both recreational and educational facilities are to be provided in step with population growth, it is important to keep longer term needs in mind when short-term provision is being designed. Often, both there and elsewhere, potentially large schools have to be built by instalments over a period of several years. Where that happens, it may be possible at each phase of construction, to make modest dual provision of the kind outlined in paragraph 2, above. Where there may, therefore, at the earlier stages be conflict with the requirements of the Standards for School Premises Regulations, the Department should be consulted before sketch plans are finalised. In such cases it will be necessary to ensure that the amount and variety of accommodation available at each intermediate stage will be at least sufficient to enable the school to function satisfactorily and that the full requirements of the Regulations will be satisfied at the completion stage.

4. The facilities so far mentioned consist of additions to, or augmentation of, provision which would have been made in one form or another for educational purposes. But local education authorities should not ignore the desirability of consulting the planning authority and other relevant departments or authorities about the possibilities of providing jointly other amenities such as branch libraries, child guidance and welfare agencies, creches, old people's clubs, or shopping and banking facilities. There might, as a result, be economies in access roads, parking facilities, use of a common heating installation, etc. In addition, less land might in total be needed for a well-designed combined scheme than for the same facilities if sited apart from each other.

Appendix B

GUIDANCE ON PROCEDURE

1. The detailed procedures to be followed in implementation of a dual provision project are matters which individual authorities will wish to decide in the light of circumstances, but the following outline of the normal stages may be helpful (the corresponding school building programme phases, as defined in Circular 13/68, are shown):-

- i. Initial contact between local education authority and participating authorities. Preliminary agreement on location and nature of project.
 - ii. Consultation, in the case of a sports project, with the regional sports council to see how the facilities proposed fit into the overall area pattern of recreation.
 - iii. Department of Education and Science and, where services other than education are involved, the additional appropriate government department(s) informed of what is under discussion, of likely timing, and of approximate cost of the project.
 - iv. Discussions between participating authorities aimed at establishing agreement upon:
 - a. the nature of the facilities to be provided;
 - b. a clear concept of the purpose, use and management of the facilities, to serve as the basis for a brief to architects.
 - c. an acceptable apportionment of capital costs;
-) School
) building
) project at
) Preliminary
) List stage

