

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 11 March 2002

REPORT ON: CHANGING CHILDREN'S SERVICES FUND

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

REPORT NO: 219 - 2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report advises members of the Scottish Executive's requirements in relation to the production of an integrated Children's Service Plan for Dundee (2002-2004) and of the establishment of a Changing Children's Services Fund.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee:-

2.1 Notes the content of this report and in particular that the latest Scottish Executive guidance is being used to inform the planning and development of Children's Services in the city.

2.2 Acknowledges the establishment of a Changing Children's Services Fund and instructs the Chief Executive to ensure that proposals for the use of these monies are developed and included within Dundee's Children's Services Plan.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The Changing Children's Services Fund has been allocated £27 million for national distribution in the new financial year and £36.5 million in the following financial year. Dundee's share of these monies amounts to £910,000 in 2002/2003 rising to £1,231,000 in 2003/2004

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

The local authority has a specific role to empower vulnerable children and young people to participate in decisions that affect them, and to enable them to contribute to an improvement in the quality of their lives.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The local authority has a specific responsibility to promote the status of all children and young people, including children in need. It must also ensure that they are treated with equity and fairness and that they are protected from discrimination.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

6.1 At the end of October 2001, the then Ministers for Education, Health and Social Justice jointly launched a Report and Action Plan entitled "For Scotland's Children". The Action Plan drawn from the major report, sets out a range of ways in which local agencies, including the voluntary sector, can work together to achieve better integrated children's services.

In support of this strategic aim, the Scottish Executive has established a Changing Children's Services Fund and has re-stated the major tasks for all agencies engaged in the planning process for Children's Services. These are to:

- (a) engage all relevant interested statutory and voluntary agencies;
- (b) assess need on the basis of robust management information;
- (c) develop a local vision;
- (d) agree funding;
- (e) arrange, co-ordinate and deliver services;
- (f) develop services;
- (g) monitor, evaluate and audit.

7.0 CHANGING CHILDREN'S SERVICES FUND

7.1 The Changing Children's Services Fund has been established as a source of transitional funding for local authorities, health boards and voluntary organisations and is intended to bring about a change in service systems. Its strategic aim is to achieve better outcomes for the most vulnerable and deprived children by making more effective and integrated service delivery through:

- (a) expansion of good practice in the delivery of well integrated services;
- (b) modernisation to reshape existing services to achieve better integrated support, and
- (c) new and innovative approaches to integrated service delivery.

This reflects the recommendations of the Scottish Executive's Action Plan and all activity supported by the Fund should also have the backing of Social Inclusion Partnerships and Drug Action Teams. A range of other organisations such as the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, the Police and the private sector also have a vital role to play.

8.0 PROPOSALS

8.1 In September 2001, a meeting to discuss the Changing Children's Services Fund was held with all interested parties. The voluntary sector organisations who attended were given the opportunity to outline their priority proposals for consideration. These have been subject to further discussion during February 2002. The proposals will be taken into account alongside the strategic analysis of needs that have been undertaken and co-ordinated by the Strategic Planning Group for Children's Services which has been informed by the work of the Development and Implementation Groups.

An Executive Group has now been established, drawn from relevant agencies. Its remit is to review and prioritise proposals having regard to local needs, and with reference to the national objectives set out by the Scottish Executive.

These include:

- (a) expanding integrated early years services for vulnerable young children in deprived communities;
- (b) provide more advice and support for parents of vulnerable children in deprived communities, including home-school links;
- (c) making available support packages for children with disabilities or special physical, emotional, mental health or educational needs;
- (d) developing targeted education, prevention and rehabilitation services for children and young people involved in or affected by drug, alcohol or substance misuse;
- (e) providing a wider range of support packages for vulnerable children and young people at key transition points, including access to psychological and psychiatric services;
- (f) ensuring universal services reach all children (for example, children who are homeless, at risk of exclusion and ethnic minorities).

Decisions on funding priorities will be strongly influenced by a joint assessment of local needs and how much the proposal will fill a significant gap in services. Proposals should add value and not substitute for existing services. They must also include a strong element of partnership working as an integral feature. It should be noted that the consolidated list of proposals will require to be approved by a representative of the Council for Voluntary Services (locally Dundee Voluntary Action)

Costed proposals have to be submitted to the Scottish Executive with the Children's Services Plan by April 2002, with the Scottish Executive giving feedback on the proposals in May/June 2002. Funding will only be released if the proposals fit the criteria for the Fund.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 Consultation has taken place with all relevant partners in the compilation of this report.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

11.0 SIGNATURE

Director of Social Work

Date

Director of Education

Date

25 February 2002