

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 17 APRIL 2006
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - 17 APRIL 2006

REPORT ON: INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

REPORT BY: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY PLANNING)

REPORT NO: 241-2006

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update the Committee on the progress and outcomes from the Chief Executive's review of children's services in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- i note and agree the outcomes from the Chief Executive's review of children's services in Dundee.
- ii agrees the establishment of a single children's services Strategic Planning Group (SPG) chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning).

2.2 It is recommended that the Personnel Committee:

- i agrees the establishment of the post of Corporate Planning Manager, (Integrated Children's Services), graded PO15-18, £37,461-£40,098 for a period of two years and the filling of this post by the current BNSF Support for Young People Co-ordinator.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The cost of funding this post over 2 years will amount to £105,000 including employer's costs. In addition a further £85,000 will be provided for commissioning services. These costs can be met from the management fee chargeable to the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund in 2005/06 which was not budgeted and will be carried forward in General Fund Balances to fund this initiative

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The development of integrated approaches will help prevent marginalised and vulnerable children and young people falling through the resources net.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 There is universal agreement across City Council Departments and partner agencies that an integrated approach to Children's Services is crucial to delivering positive outcomes for Dundee's children.

6.2 The integrated agenda is firmly imbedded within the draft Children's Services Plan, "A Plan for Dundee's Children" 2005/2008 which is currently with the Scottish Executive awaiting approval.

- 6.3 'A Plan for Dundee's Children' expresses a shared multi-disciplinary commitment "that every child and young person in Dundee deserves the best possible start in life". The 'Plan' will continue to evolve and adapt to changing needs taking positive steps towards co-ordinating and strengthening services and support to children, young people and families across the city.
- 6.4 Dundee's 'integrated approach' is based around the development and implementation of strategies across agency boundaries for improving services and outcomes for children and young people. This will be achieved through the rationalisation and corporate co-ordination of existing and new resources, focussing on the delivery of effective child-centred activities.
- 6.5 Although Dundee has yet to implement a city-wide cross-agency integrated approach to Children's services, it has already established a number of successful 'localised collaborations' across City Council Departments, NHS Tayside, Police and the Voluntary Organisations and the private sector.
- 6.6 These partnerships are financed through a number of different funding streams such as the Community Regeneration Fund, Better Neighbourhood Service Fund, Changing Children's Services Fund, etc.
- 6.7 The collaborations and funding help tackle many of the priority issues in Dundee today, such as, child care, child health, youth justice, anti-social behaviour, child protection, education achievement, etc.
- 6.8 Although the 2005 Audit of Best Value and Community Planning highlighted the Council's overall positive approach to continuous and identified many good examples of achievements it also stated, "*Much more could be achieved through tighter corporate management, more effective integration across services and a more strategic and systematic approach*".
- 6.9 The Audit positively highlighted the establishment of a corporate working group on children's services, which was established following an external consultant's report commissioned in June 2005 by the Chief Executive. The Independent Consultant was commissioned to examine the potential for the development of more integrated approaches to children's services across Dundee City Council by critically examining the current arrangements for the delivery of children's services in Dundee and to make recommendations in areas where outcomes could be improved through a more integrated approach and within current structures.
- 6.10 The results of the Consultant's findings were deliberated upon at a one-day seminar attended by all the major stakeholders including Elected Members, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Administration.
- 6.11 Emerging from this was 'structured action plan' remitted to individual Directors and Departments with corporate responsibility for performance, championing, development of and driving improvement across key themes.
- 6.12 The vision was children's services as a single service system encompassing multi-functional departments with a shared culture, values and visionary leadership and management style.
- 6.13 This integrated approach also provides the opportunity to revisit and review existing risk controls to ensure the future provision of the Service is delivered in a manner consistent with the best possible standards to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people and the staff charged with their care. In so doing the Council will have regard to compliance with statutory requirements and good practice to strive to identify, minimise and control its risk exposures.

7.0 PROPOSALS

- 7.1 The 2005/2008 Integrated Children's Services Plan, 'A Plan for Dundee's Children' creates a framework to focus further development and identifying key factors to support change and implementation.
- 7.2 The 'Plan' aims to guide the development and implementation of strategies across agency boundaries for improving services and outcomes for children and young people and focuses on the rationalisation and corporate co-ordination of existing and new resources.
- 7.3 The Children's Services Plan was co-ordinated through the Children's Services Planning Executive Group chaired by the Director of Education and included representatives from Education, Social Work, Leisure and Communities Departments of the Council as well as representatives from Health, Police, Voluntary Sector and the Children's Reporter. Running concurrently with this group was a separate internal Dundee City Council Corporate Working Group chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning), which had the remit to translate the Consultants findings into an action plan for the integration of Children's Services based on the principles above.
- 7.4 The Action Plan has been completed highlighting those priority areas for future development of integrated approaches to Children's Services with the main priorities identified in section 8 below.
- 7.5 In order to avoid duplication and any possible confusion in regard to their respective roles it is proposed to amalgamate the two groups into a Strategic Planning Group (SPG) (see Appendix 1) made up of chief officers from, Leisure and Communities, Education, Social Work, Housing, Finance, Health, Police, Voluntary Sector and Children's Reporter and Chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive, Community Planning.

The overarching objectives for the SPG are;

- Placing a central importance on the well-being, needs and interests of all children;
 - Engaging all relevant interests, build on and link existing services and resources, and develop a shared vision of working together and a shared commitment to improve services;
 - Ensuring inclusive access to universal services and further develop the potential of these services to meet a full range of need;
 - Developing co-ordinated multi-agency approaches to the identification and assessment of need; and
 - Targeting and facilitating intervention and support particularly on children with additional needs
- 7.6 The establishment of the post of Corporate Planning Manager (Integrated Children's Services) for an initial period of two years is necessary to take lead responsibility for the implementation and facilitation of the integrated children's services strategy and to facilitate the development of integrated service delivery by providing the link between the structural levels.

7.7 The Corporate Planning Manager post will be developed by continuing and re-orientating the role of the existing BNSF Support for Young People Co-ordinator. The Corporate Planning Manager will remain established within the office of the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) and will report directly to him and to the Strategic Planning Group. The current BNSF Support for Young People Co-ordinator will fill the post.

7.8 A commission fund will be established with a 'start up' budget of £85,000 met from the carry-over from BNSF. The purpose of the fund is to 'pump-prime' innovative approaches to integrated working across children's services. Access to the fund will be dependent on meeting established criteria based on current and future children's services priorities. The fund will be managed through the Integrated Children's Services Implementation and Management Group.

8.0 PRIORITIES

The following outlines a number of priority areas crucial in the development of integrated approaches to Children's Services;

8.1 Partnerships

Dundee's model of integrated working is more about building robust, interlinked partnerships across departments and agencies than about physically joining services together.

8.2 Integrated Community Schools (ICS)

ICS is an opportunity to extend joint working to provide an integrated range of support for all young people, including provision and support for vulnerable children and families.

8.3 Co-location

Experience backed up by research tells us that effectiveness is promoted where there is team co-location, willingness to work together, learning from one another, a shared vision, strong leadership combined with staff training and development opportunities leading to joint working practices, integrated planning and working.

8.4 Resources

It is recognised that there are difficulties resulting from the financial constraints currently placed across council services and more acutely within the external placement budget.

There are cash and efficiency savings to be had through a much more effective use of external health, care and education placements.

8.5 Leadership

Leadership is recognised as being at the heart of developing integrated approaches to children's services.

Committed political leadership is seen as a pre-requisite in maximising best outcomes for young people, children and their families.

Commitment to more integrated children's services in practice needs to be supported and reflected through a more integrated approach to children's services at all levels including its Committees.

8.6 Integrated decision-making

It is recognised that integrated decision-making can produce positive outcomes in terms of service development and delivery. This can often lead to, clarity of purpose, enhanced speed of service delivery with a positive impact by providing what's best for the child.

Integrated decision-making can also promote transparency through improved information sharing leading to better decisions and best use of limited resources. It can also very usefully help identify gaps in provision and resources.

8.7 Targeted Services

Our services are often reactive and even when we can predict those children and young people who will go on to need further support; we find resource constraints prevent service delivery. In a world of 'priorities' it is very difficult to fund/resource preventative work.

8.8 Community Planning

There is a clear need to look at children and young people within the context of their communities and develop and deliver services accordingly.

8.9 Workforce Strategy

It is recognised that many professionals and their Departments have no clear understanding of differing roles and responsibilities carried out by different professions and departments. This often leads to building of barriers, lack of trust and a reduced commitment to integrated approaches.

8.10 Integrated Forums

It is acknowledged that there is a preponderance of meetings, groups, structures and committees, attended by the same people with agendas broadly similar, focussing on the same client group or groups. There will be a rationalisation of forums with the aim of appropriately combining them around a shared agenda.

8.11 Targets/Outcomes

Targets are a major issue as they often don't fit across services striving to develop and deliver integrated approaches and this often leads to departments and agencies retrenching to what they see as their core business.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposals and actions outlined within this report will assist Children's Services in Dundee to be more integrated and better meet the demand for quality joined-up services for Dundee's children and young people.

10.0 CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Director of Education, Director of Leisure and Communities, Director of Housing, Director of Social Work and NHS Tayside Child Health Commissioner have been consulted.

11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

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10 April 2006

APPENDIX 2

INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE



