

**REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 19 APRIL 2004**

**REPORT ON: COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT: LIBRARIES – INTRODUCTION OF “MATHS IN A BAG”**

**REPORT BY: HEAD OF COMMUNITIES**

**REPORT NO: 275-2004**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The Committee's approval is sought to introduce a new service in the Central Library and Community Libraries aimed at improving numeracy from an early age.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the introduction of the “Maths in a Bag” scheme.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The cost of this proposal can be contained within the £10,000 external grant received from the Clydesdale Bank Community Partnership Fund.

## **4.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The additional resource will contribute by providing educational opportunities for pre-school children.

## **5.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The proposals will contribute to the development of numeracy and literacy skills of pre school children in the city.

## **6.0 BACKGROUND**

6.1 Over the last five years, the Communities Department has been operating a Bookstart scheme in partnership with the Education Department and Tayside NHS Trust. Packs are distributed by Health Visitors to the parents/carers of every six-month old child. These packs contain two picture books, a nursery rhyme place mat, a booklet entitled “Babies Love Books: A Guide for Grown-Ups”, and a leaflet which contains information about relevant services in Dundee, including the Dundee Early Years and Childcare Partnership Team, and an invitation to join the library.

6.2 Research undertaken since the Bookstart Scheme's inception, over 10 years ago, has shown that, in general, “Bookstart” babies were well ahead in literacy skills on starting school. In addition, because so many pre-school books are based on counting rhymes, numeracy skills have also benefited from the access to books at an early age which is encouraged through the scheme.

6.3 The “Maths in a Bag” initiative is similar in principle to the Bookstart scheme, but with the focus placed on numeracy. It is a Community Partnership scheme sponsored by the Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank.

- 6.4 To date there are two “Maths in a Bag” schemes running in the UK – one in Northern Ireland, which started in 2002, and the other in Manchester which was launched in January of this year. Dundee’s “Maths in a Bag” service would be the first in Scotland.
- 6.5 “Maths in a Bag” aims to give every pre-school child a good start by learning through play and will help raise awareness amongst parents and carers of the importance of early literacy and numeracy skills.
- 6.6 “Maths in a Bag” will contain a variety of resources to support mathematical activities e.g. a book, games, rhymes, information.
- 6.7 Bags will be available for loan from Public Libraries to parents, carers, playgroups, nurseries, child and family centres and registered childminders. Partner organisations working with parent groups, e.g. Early Years Team, Adult Learning Workers, Health Visitors, Access to Learning Project, will also be able to the borrow bags.
- 6.8 Library and Information staff will be able to use them for library activities, such as storytimes.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Director of Education.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 No background papers as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

**Stewart Murdoch**  
**Head of Communities**

**9 April 2004**