

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE - 20 JUNE 2005

**REPORT ON:** SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE FUNDING TO IMPROVE FOSTERING SERVICES

**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

**REPORT NO:** 378 - 2005

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report provides members with details of the Scottish Executive's proposed funding allocation to Dundee to improve fostering services and makes recommendations on what service improvements should be made with the monies.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:-

2.1 Note the proposed funding allocation from the Scottish Executive to improve Dundee's Fostering Service.

2.2 Agree that the priority improvements to be made using this funding are:

- To increase fostering allowances to 75% of the Fostering Network recommended rates.
- To pay one additional weeks allowance to carers at Christmas.
- To introduce a dedicated out of hours support service for foster carers.
- To run a sustained recruitment campaign over 2006 with the aim of approving an additional 10 fostering placements by December 2007.

2.3 The Director of Social Work be remitted to write a letter to the Scottish Executive highlighting the continued underfunding of Local Authority fostering services.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The proposed service developments outlined in the report will be financed by additional Scottish Executive funding to improve fostering services (see Appendix 1).

3.2 The placement costs of the proposed increased number of foster carers will depend on the success of the recruitment programme and will be the subject of a further report.

### **4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Our current fostering service is in line with the principles of Agenda 21 in that efforts are made wherever possible to meet the needs of the children locally and for their social, education and health needs to be promoted within a family setting.

## 5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Foster Care Service recognises and values diversity and promotes the principles of equal opportunities.

## 6.0 MAIN TEXT

- 6.1 In November 2004 it was announced that an additional £12 million would be made available to Local Authorities in Scotland to improve Fostering Services, including the recruitment and retention of foster carers.

- 6.2 On 12 April 2005, Dundee City Council was informed that based on the numbers of looked after and accommodated children in Dundee, it was proposed, subject to the Scottish Executive agreeing the spending proposals, to allocate funding of:

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
£123,200	£246,300	£123,200

- 6.3 While this funding will enable some service improvements to be made in Dundee, the funding is insufficient to make significant changes to service provision. For example, one improvement area suggested by the Scottish Executive is for Local Authorities to use the monies to raise their allowances to the Fostering Network rates. The cost of implementing this recommendation in Dundee would be £357,642 per annum. There remains a very significant under funding of Local Authority fostering services.

- 6.4 The Social Work Committee of 21 February 2005 (Report No 107/2005) agreed the main priorities for the future development of Dundee's Fostering Service would be:

- o To increase the size of foster care provision in Dundee in order to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of children requiring accommodation.
- o Improve conditions of service for Foster Carers in terms of Fees and Allowances.
- o Improve Out of Hours support for Foster Carers recognising that the most effective support is provided by dedicated Family Placement Staff.
- o Improve the support and therapeutic services available to foster children.
- o Enhance the current Link Carer Scheme with a view to placing and supporting more children with relatives.

- 6.5 In terms of the funding available, it is proposed to use the monies to progress some of the priorities above. Specifically:

- o To increase fostering allowances to 75% of the Fostering Network rates from the current 65% at a cost of £94,697 per annum (2004/05 rates).
- o To pay one additional weeks Christmas allowance to carers at a cost of £14,085 per annum (2004/05 rates).
- o To introduce an Out of Hours support service for foster carers at a cost of £15,000 per annum. This would provide telephone support from dedicated Family Placement staff on a 24 hour basis over 365 days per annum.

- To run a sustained recruitment campaign over 2006 with the aim of having an additional 10 foster placements available for Dundee children at a one off cost of approximately £200,000. This would provide:

- Regular slots on Grampian Television (£30,000)
- Advertising on Dundee buses (£40,000)
- Advertising on Dundee taxis (£5,000)
- Advertising on local radio (£20,000)
- Advertising in local newspapers (£35,000)
- Updating publicity materials (£5,000)
- Use of Foster Carers on a sessional basis to run recruitment activities (£30,000)
- Employing additional sessional Social Workers for recruitment/assessment work (£35,000)

The phasing of this expenditure is shown at Appendix 1, based on the assumption that the Scottish Executive approves Dundee City Council's action plan by the end of 2005.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Depute Chief Executive (Finance) were consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

Alan G Baird  
Director of Social Work

Date: 10 June 2005

## Scottish Executive Funding to Improve Fostering Services

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
	£	£	£
Scottish Executive Funding Available	123,200	246,300	123,200
Add :Balance Brought Forward from Previous Year		82,850	3,680
<i>Less Proposed Expenditure :</i>			
Increase Fostering Allowances to 75% of Fostering Network Rates	23,750	96,190	97,420
Additional Christmas Allowance	14,100	14,280	14,460
Out of Hours Support Service	2,500	15,000	15,000
Recruitment Campaign		200,000	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>40,350</b>	<b>325,470</b>	<b>126,880</b>
<i>Balance Carried Forward to Future Years</i>	<i>82,850</i>	<i>3,680</i>	<i>0</i>