

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 22 SEPTEMBER 2008**  
**REPORT ON: EAST PORT HOUSE**  
**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK**  
**REPORT NO: 465 - 2008**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Committee of proposals to undertake an options appraisal of East Port House, following a report which was recently agreed at the Community Justice Authority.
- 1.2 East Port House provides a valuable resource for adult offenders and has received positive reports from the Care Commission however there has been a reduction in occupancy levels and the indications are that attempts are increasingly being made to sustain offenders in other forms of housing. It is therefore now appropriate to consider the future direction of the unit and its contribution to reducing re-offending.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Community Justice Authority recently agreed a report recommending that an options appraisal be undertaken in respect of East Port House. It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:
  - 2.1.1 Notes that the Chief Officer of the Community Justice Authority will lead an options appraisal of East Port House involving staff from relevant agencies, including Dundee City Council and will report back to the Community Justice Authority in March 2009.
  - 2.1.2 Instructs the Director of Social Work to submit a report to Committee following the conclusion of the options appraisal.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications of conducting an options appraisal however, there may be financial implications arising from the outcome of the appraisal and these will be the subject of a further report to Committee.

### **4.0 MAIN TEXT**

- 4.1 Members are reminded that East Port House is an accommodation resource for adult offenders who are at risk of custody and who are likely to re-offend without intense support. The unit does not accommodate sex offenders nor offenders convicted of arson. It provides 16 beds for offenders subject to bail conditions, community sentences, parole licences, home leave from prison and voluntary resettlement programmes, four beds are specifically for women. The unit aims to provide a constructive alternative to custody, reduce re-offending and promote social inclusion. Referrals are accepted from across Tayside, the Scottish Prison Service and other Local Authorities.
- 4.2 Dundee City Council manages East Port House on behalf of the Tayside Criminal Justice Partnership. The Community Justice Authority has responsibility for funding issues.
- 4.3 The indications are that admissions are decreasing and over the six months to June 2008, occupancy levels were seldom above 50% with 1213 nights of accommodation provided, 862 for Dundee people. Whilst decreasing workloads in some court areas may have partly contributed to a change in demand, areas are increasingly trying to accommodate and support offenders within their own communities promoting sustainable links to mainstream

services consistent with the National Strategy for the Management of Offenders. There is an increasing trend toward supporting offenders in mainstream housing and innovative efforts have been made to achieve this locally.

#### 4.4 Budget

Members are reminded that there has been no inflationary uplift for non-core services within the grant for Criminal Justice Social Work Services since 2005-06 which has resulted in considerable pressures for all non-core services including East Port House. Representation was made to the Scottish Government early 2007 which resulted in an additional payment of £35,230 being made as an exceptional measure, mainly to cover the substantial increase in property rent costs. Changes in relation to Supporting People payments have also impacted on the income of the unit and steps have been taken to avoid a predicted overspend of £127,000 this financial year by using other non-core funding and contributions from local Supporting People monies. While this is possible this financial year, such an approach cannot be sustained in the longer term and therefore a report was submitted to the Community Justice Authority suggesting that there would be benefit in undertaking a full option appraisal of East Port House in light of both the changing accommodation needs of offenders and these budgetary constraints. There is no additional funding available nationally to cover longer term shortfalls in the East Port House budget.

#### 5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been screened for any policy implications in relation to sustainability, strategic environmental assessment, anti-poverty, equality impact assessment and risk management.

There are no major issues.

#### 6.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Head of Finance, the other authorities in the Tayside Partnership and the Chief Officer of the Community Justice Authority were consulted in preparation of this report.

#### 7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Tayside Community Justice Authority Committee Report TCJA9-2008, Report on Tayside Community Justice Authority Audit and Review of Supported Accommodation; Scotland's Choice - report of the Scottish Prisons Commission, July 2008; National Strategy for the Management of Offenders, 2006; and Tayside Community Justice Authority Area Plan 2008 - 2011, September 2007.

Alan G Baird  
Director of Social Work

DATE: 3rd September 2008